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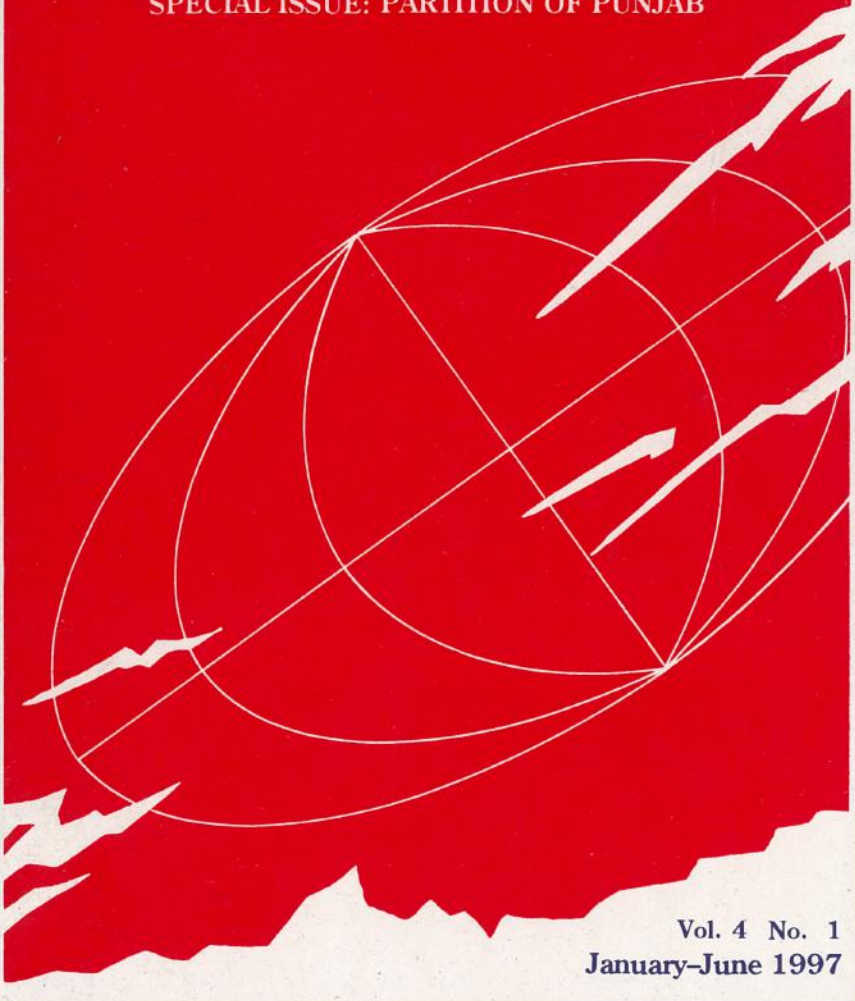

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Introduction

All the articles in this volume were presented to a panel on the theme of the partition of Punjab and Bengal, which was co-convened by Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot at the Copenhagen 14th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies. The panel was designed to operate around three themes. The first was to produce a historical insight 'from below' of the events which accompanied the British decision to divide and quit India in 1947. The second was to reflect on the political, economic and cultural legacies of the partition for the subcontinent. Finally, contributors were encouraged to tease out the meanings of the partition of 1947 for those now resident in the Punjabi diaspora.

The articles which are published here reflect fresh methodological and intellectual insights as well as provide the reader with access to a wealth of new empirical material. A number of them properly reflect on the human dimension of the partition episode, which has been frequently neglected in the study of its 'high politics'. Such new historical sources as literature are deployed in order to achieve this. Other articles look ahead from the partition and examine the different roles which the Punjab regions have played in the national political and economic histories of post-Independence India and Pakistan. Finally, the impact of partition on the sense of Punjabi identity is addressed in this volume. Despite their different emphases, the reader is alerted throughout the articles to the growing significance of regional and comparative study.

One contributor from India queried: Why hold a panel on partition so geographically and culturally distant from the scene of the events themselves? The quality and range of the contributions in themselves constitute an answer, providing further evidence of the coming of age of Punjab Studies as an internationally acknowledged field of interdisciplinary area studies. This internationalisation of academic study mirrors the internationalisation of the Punjabi community itself, as was demonstrated to a number of the panel members by the hospitality they received during it.

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The articles taken together are a tribute to the growing wealth of scholarship on the 'three Punjabs' as their people with mixed emotions await the golden jubilee of the subcontinent's independence. The partition and all that accompanied it remains a defining moment in South Asia's modern history. The reader is invited here to share in the emotions it evoked(s) as well as to enter into the ferment of intellectual debate which surrounds its significance and legacy.

'Sir Cyril Goes to India': Partition, Boundary-Making and Disruptions in the Punjab

Tan Tai Yong

National University of Singapore

The partition of Punjab in August 1947 was accompanied by considerable violence and destruction, claiming at least 200,000 lives and leaving over 12 million people homeless. This paper suggests that the tragic repercussions of partition can be explained by the process of boundary-making, which led to the eventual Radcliffe line which divided the Punjab. The Radcliffe Award left large blocs of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs on the wrong side of the border, and destroyed the economic and communication structure in central Punjab. This in turn led to the major disruptions to population and property that followed.

I

For millions of people across northern India, independence from British rule in August 1947 came at tremendous personal cost. For them, the central experience of freedom from colonial rule was not one of joyous celebrations but of displacement, dislocation and disruption. The vivisection of Punjab and Bengal in the wake of British departure from the subcontinent entailed for these people a division of homelands, and set off a series of reverberations, the effects of which are felt to this day.[1]

Partition is a political act in which 'a single unit on the map is divided into two or more parts'. Imposed either by agreement or military action, it often brings 'with it several different consequences, ranging from the geographical, cultural and social through the economic and administrative'.[2] Newly created frontiers often serve as potential flash-points of conflict and can trigger varying degrees of disruption and

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displacements of population as shown by the examples of Indochina, Ireland, Palestine, Cyprus, Germany, Korea and Yugoslavia.[3]

Of the various cases of partitioned territory this century, the partition of Punjab in August 1947 was arguably the most momentous in terms of the magnitude of calamity which it engendered. It resulted in massive bloodshed and engulfed the region in appalling communal violence, on a scale and level of brutality that was unprecedented. Almost 200,000 people were killed and the number of casualties from the upheaval in the weeks following partition was estimated at between 200,000 and 250,000 non-Muslims and an equal number of Muslims. The partition of the Punjab triggered one of the biggest displacements of population in history: an estimated four and a half million Sikhs and Hindus were uprooted from their homes in West Punjab and migrated, under appalling conditions, to eastern Punjab, which became a part of India, while almost five and a half million Muslims moved in the opposite direction under the same conditions.[4] The loss in property as a result of migration of communities to either side of the new border amounted to over Rs 150 crores. The catastrophic situation in Punjab in those traumatic weeks of August 1947, when the rest of India was celebrating its new found freedom, was expressed by Jawaharlal Nehru: 'In the Punjab, both in the East and West, there was disaster and sorrow. There was mass murder and arson and looting in many places and streams of refugees poured out from one place to another.'[5]

It can plausibly be argued that the horrific repercussions in the wake of Punjab's partition were not so much the outcome of partition itself, i.e., the redrawing of a political map, but of the process—the speed and manner in which partition was decided and the way in which a new borderline was created. In five weeks, a complex boundary following no natural features was drawn across a region that had for centuries existed as an economic and cultural unit. This paper examines the boundary-making process in Punjab, and argues that the approach to the demarcation of the boundary and the eventual 'Radcliffe Award' created the basis of major disruptions in central Punjab, and in the context of a heightened state of anxiety concerning the fate of the province, a simmering communal war erupted, triggered by the disruptions, resulting in the horrendous communal violence and major upheavals that followed.

II

Events in Punjab leading up to partition were a portent of things to come. By 1946, with British departure imminent and the demand for a separate Muslim state of Pakistan gaining momentum in northern India, Punjab found itself caught in the throes of communal tension. Communal relations among the three major communities, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, which had coexisted more or less peacefully with each other for a century, steadily deteriorated as it became increasingly uncertain if the Punjab, which all three communities claimed as their historical homeland, would become a separate Muslim state or remain as part of greater Hindustan. The general atmosphere of tension and communal ill-feeling was exacerbated by widespread Muslim agitation against the coalition government and the proliferation of branches of private communal armies like the Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, Muslim League National Guards and Akali Sena throughout the province. The tempo of communal politics in Punjab rose when the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee announced on 20 February 1947 that the British would transfer power in the Indian subcontinent by 'a date not later than June 1948'. The announcement, the most concrete statement to that date of the British intention concerning the transfer of power in India, spurred Muslim separatist activities in the country, particularly in the Punjab. Although a Muslim majority province, Punjab was never at the forefront of Muslim separatism in India. The Muslim League nonetheless realised that without establishing control over the province, it could not hope to make a realistic bid for Pakistan. Whatever the motives behind Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, it was clear that his political gambit depended upon control of this key Muslim majority province.

The political fallout in Punjab following Attlee's announcement was almost immediate: its premier, Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, unable to cope with the strain of deteriorating law and order in his province, which had been gathering momentum since the elections of 1946, announced his resignation in March 1947. The resignation of Khizar signalled the final collapse of Unionist dominance in the province. Since the 1920s, the Unionist party, a combine of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh agricultural interests, had provided the mainstay of provincial politics. The provincial alliance was so successful that it was for the most part able to keep the Muslim League and Congress out of Punjabi politics. By the end of the Second World War, the inter-communal alliance,

weakened by war strain and weariness and facing the onslaught of a determined Muslim League, began to crack.[6]

The results of the 1946 elections confirmed the falling fortunes of the Unionist alliance. The Muslim League emerged as the most dominant Muslim party in the Punjab, polling 75.26 per cent of the votes, whereas the Unionists obtained 26.61 per cent of the votes. Of the 86 Muslim seats to be contested in the 175-member provincial legislative assembly, the Muslim League secured 75 seats to become the largest single party in the assembly. In contrast, the Unionist party, which had held 96 seats previously, could this time manage only 18 seats.[7] Despite the electoral setback, Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana, leader of the Unionist party, managed to hold on to power by forming a coalition ministry with the support of the Akali party and the Congress. But the writing was on the wall. With the Muslim League openly championing the cause of Pakistan and starting on a campaign of open hostility against the coalition government, tension and communal ill-feeling in the Punjab began to simmer.

In the months following Khizar's resignation, violent clashes between Sikhs and Muslims erupted with disturbing regularity. Communal riots broke out in the districts of Rawalpindi, Attock and Multan, where the outnumbered Sikhs and Hindus were especially hard hit. Communal violence dashed all hopes of a rapprochement between Muslims and non-Muslims. Resigned to the fact that Pakistan could no longer be avoided, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution on 8 March calling for a division of the Punjab into 'two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part'.[8] Sikh politicians too began to see partition as the only solution to the Punjab problem.[9] In early April, Sikh and Hindu members of the Punjab legislative assembly called for partition of the Punjab as the 'immediate administrative problem which should have first priority.'[10]

It did not take long for Britain's last Viceroy to India, Lord Louis Mountbatten, to come to the conclusion that the prospect of transferring power to a unitary India had become, by the time he arrived in India, well nigh impossible. Mountbatten had been sent to India with a clear brief: to dismantle the British empire in India as quickly as possible. As far as he was concerned what had to be done had to be done quickly, and he demonstrated this commitment by bringing forward the target date for British withdrawal from June 1948 to August 1947. Not wishing to have his schedule upset by the intransigence of the Congress and

Muslim League, he made it clear at the very outset that he was prepared to countenance a division of the subcontinent if he could not bring the two parties to agree on a political arrangement that would enable the British to transfer power to a unitary India.

Within weeks of his arrival, Mountbatten conceived of a plan which provided for a division of the subcontinent into the two dominions of Pakistan and India. According to this plan, the provincial assemblies of Bengal and Punjab would be notionally divided, on the basis of Muslim and non-Muslim majority districts, to vote on whether their respective half of the provinces would join the existing constituent assembly or form an altogether new one which would then frame a constitution for Pakistan; in other words, to stay with India or divide and break with it. The Mountbatten Plan was announced on 3 June 1947, and publicly accepted by Nehru, Jinnah and the Sikh leader, Sardar Baldev Singh.[11]

With the acceptance of Mountbatten's 3 June Plan, the main political parties had acquiesced in the need to partition the provinces of Punjab and Bengal. Evan Jenkins, Governor of Punjab, suggested that they had done so for different reasons. The Muslim Leaguers saw in the Plan the materialisation of their Pakistan, while the Congress regarded it as a 'master-stroke by Patel, who having pushed the Muslims into a corner (or two corners), will be able to destroy them before very long'. The Sikhs were hopeful that the partition boundary would be kind to them, and were pinning their faith on the Boundary Commission and making demands for exchanges of property and transfers of population.[12] The endorsement of the decision to partition was a formality. For the Punjab, a notional boundary had already been drawn for voting to ascertain if the province was to be partitioned. Based on the 1941 census, West Punjab was to be constituted by the Muslim majority areas comprising Lahore division (excluding Amritsar district), and Rawalpindi and Multan divisions, while the remainder of the districts, the non-Muslim areas of Ambala and Jullundur divisions, and Amritsar district of Lahore division, would form East Punjab. On 23 June 1947, at a joint session of the western and eastern sections of the Punjab assembly held at Lahore, 91 members voted in favour of the new constituent assembly and 77 for the present constituent assembly.[13] By the decision of the legislative assembly, the die was thus cast for the partition of Punjab.

III

Getting the various parties to agree on the partition of the British empire into two dominions was the easier of Mountbatten's tasks in India. Having done that, he had to tackle the much harder job of drawing the borderlines that would divide the new dominions of India and Pakistan. The administrative mechanism responsible for demarcating the boundaries of the provinces to be partitioned was provided for under Section 9 of the 3 June Plan. As soon as the Punjab and Bengal assemblies had taken the decision to partition, a Boundary Commission would be appointed by the Governor-General, 'the membership and terms of reference of which will be settled in consultation with those concerned'.[14] Initially, Jinnah had proposed the setting up of a commission comprising three impartial non-Indians to be appointed by the United Nations Organisation.[15] The proposal was, however, opposed by Secretary of State Listowel, who, among other considerations, did not wish for the problems of empire to be resolved by international bodies,[16] and by Congress, which felt that recourse to the United Nations would cause unacceptable delay. Subsequently, Mountbatten opted for a proposal by Nehru on the setting up of a commission that would consist of an independent chairman and four other persons of whom two would be nominated by the Muslim League and two by Congress.[17] Accordingly, a Punjab Boundary Commission was appointed on 30 June 1947, comprising four judges of the Indian High Court—two Muslims, Mr Justice Din Mohammed and Mr Justice Mohammed Munir, one Hindu, Mr Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan, and one Sikh, Mr Justice Teja Singh.[18]

The problems of such a constituted Commission were apparent from the very beginning. Despite the fact that members of the Commission were all individuals of 'high judicial standing', it was clear that they would represent the communal interests of the party which nominated them, and there was every likelihood that a Boundary Commission comprising two Muslim and two non-Muslim members would be deadlocked down the middle on disputed issues. Furthermore, according to the 3 June Plan, it was not made explicit what would happen in the event of differences of opinion between members of the Commission. This ambiguity, in a sense, left the chairman of the Commission with a considerable role to play in the deliberation process. Mountbatten had earlier decided that one man should be appointed chairman of the Boundary Commission for both Punjab and Bengal, and that he would have a casting vote to be used in the event of disagreement between

the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League who would advise him. This made the role of chairman extremely critical. An earlier provision that each Commission (Punjab and Bengal) would elect its own chairman was later modified to provide for the appointment of a European chairman on the grounds that it would expedite the work of the Commissions which was to finish by 15 August.[19]

A chairman for the Punjab Boundary Commission was soon found, who would also jointly chair the Bengal Commission. The chosen individual was Sir Cyril Radcliffe,[20] vice-chairman of the General Council of the English Bar, recommended for the job by the Secretary of State as a man of 'great legal abilities, right personality and wide administrative experience'.[21] Mountbatten, who had known Radcliffe when the latter was Director-General of the Ministry of Information during the War, too, was 'struck by his ability' and fully supported his appointment.[22]

Radcliffe, it seemed, had another important virtue. He apparently had no connections with India or Indian politics, and had absolutely no local knowledge of the territories he was to divide. The fact that no one objected to his appointment despite his evident lack of knowledge of the Indian problem and inexperience in this kind of arbitration suggested that it was probably the promise of his impartiality that was valued above all else. Mountbatten took pains to project this image of impartiality, especially from official influence, by carefully keeping personal contacts with him to a minimum, to the extent of insisting that Radcliffe be housed in neither the Governor's residence while at Calcutta nor the Viceroy's house in Delhi.[23]

Impartiality borne of a detachment from local conditions was an important consideration for a job of the kind that Radcliffe was about to undertake. However, it had a negative side. As the final arbiter of the division of both the Punjab and Bengal, an awesome responsibility was about to be placed on Radcliffe's shoulders. Following a subsequent amendment made to the Indian Independence Bill to the effect that

> the expression Award means in relation to the Boundary Commission the decision of the chairman of the Commission, Radcliffe was made singularly responsible for the boundaries that would divide India and Pakistan. As a veteran of Indian affairs pointed out, it was a task probably too great for one person even if his expertise had lain in boundary-making rather than constitutional law.[24]

The difficulty was surely compounded by the fact that this was a

man who had, prior to July 1947, not set foot on Indian soil, and as a result had a total lack of understanding of and sensitivity to the complexities of the territories he was to divide. According to Leonard Mosley, Radcliffe was aware of the immense difficulties of the task that awaited him. At his first meeting with Mountbatten and the Indian leaders on 8 July, Radcliffe spoke of the 'vastness of India and its multitudinous populations', and pointed out that it would take the 'most careful arbitrators years to decide' on a boundary that would certainly cut across homes and populations. He was evidently shocked when told that he had only five weeks to decide.[25]

The time-frame within which Radcliffe had to complete his task made the task all the more daunting. Soon after his arrival in Delhi on 8 July 1947, Radcliffe hurried off for a quick visit to Lahore and Calcutta. It was soon impressed upon him that the work of demarcating the boundaries had to be completed by 15 August, a request with which Radcliffe readily concurred.[26] Subsequently, arising from requests by the Governor of Punjab 'for advance intimation not only of the date of award but also of its contents . . . in view of the precautions it would be necessary to take in the districts likely to be affected, particularly those of central Punjab',[27] the Punjab Partition Committee asked for announcement of the award by 10 August, to which Radcliffe could only promise an announcement two days later, on 12 August.[28] The schedule imposed on Radcliffe meant that, in effect, he, a total stranger to Punjab, had approximately four weeks (hardly any time to inspect the lands and communities through which his boundary line would be drawn) to decide on the demarcation of a boundary that would divide a province of more than 35 million people, thousands of villages, towns and cities, a unified and integrated system of canals and communication networks, and 16 million Muslims, 15 million Hindus and 5 million Sikhs, who despite their religious differences shared a common culture, language and history.

The complexity of the task was soon made evident by the memoranda and representations submitted by interested parties. During the last ten days of July 1947, the Punjab Boundary Commission held a series of public hearings in Lahore and heard the submissions and arguments provided in the main by eminent lawyers like Mohammed Zafarullah Khan, M.L. Seetalvad, and Harnam Singh, acting as counsels for the Muslim League, Congress and the Akali Dal, respectively. A number of other interested parties appeared and argued their cases before the Commission. Radcliffe, who also had to deal with the partition of Bengal

as chairman of the Bengal Boundary Commission, absented himself from all these public sittings in Lahore.

Not unexpectedly, different communities and interests in the Punjab who submitted lengthy memoranda and representations to the Boundary Commission all had different ideas as to how the boundary in the Punjab should be demarcated. The claims were divergent and competing, as each community tried to influence a boundary demarcation that would secure maximum benefits for it.

The case for the Muslim community in the Punjab rested mainly on the basis of demography. The Muslims claimed that the fundamental principle on which the division of the Punjab was agreed upon was that of contiguous areas for Muslims and non-Muslims. On this alone, Muslims must be given all districts in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan divisions, which according to the 1941 census were all Muslim majority districts, the majority determined simply by the 'counting of heads and by no other means'. In addition to these Muslim majority districts, Justice Din Mohammed, summing up the case for Muslims, claimed for West Punjab, Ferozepur and Zira *tehsils* of the district of Ferozepur, Nakoda and Jullundur tehsils of Jullundur district and Ajnala tehsil in Amritsar district, together with some smaller tehsils from Ambala district, and Hoshiarpur on the basis that Muslims constituted a majority in these tehsils and they were contiguous with the Muslim majority areas of western Punjab. Muslims also claimed the tehsil of Pathankot, although not a Muslim majority area, because of the Madhopur irrigation head-works which irrigated the Muslim majority tehsils of Gurdaspur, Batala, Ajnala, Lahore, Kasur and Chunian.[29]

The Congress, on the other hand, attempted to make its claims on the basis of 'other factors'. Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan, making the case for Hindus, pointed out that although the population factor 'was undoubtedly the main factor in the division', he could not agree that 'in no circumstances could it be overridden'. He emphasised that 'if the population factor was . . . the sole basis of division', then there was no need for the Commission to take into account 'other factors' in its demarcation of the boundary separating East and West Punjab. Based on this, the Hindus tried to push the boundary as far west as possible, following the Chenab in the east and then continued south-westwards across the northern sections of Lyallpur and Multan districts. Many of the districts which it claimed for India were in fact Muslim majority districts. But Congress justified its claims on the basis that non-Muslims had a greater economic stake in the Punjab, although they were

outnumbered by Muslims. The town of Lahore, for instance, was claimed for East Punjab because it had 'historical associations with Hindu and Sikh history', and its economic life, in industries, insurance and commerce, was developed and owned by non-Muslims. It was further argued that the city of Lahore was situated east of the river Ravi, which constituted a natural boundary line between East and West Punjab. Gurdaspur, a Muslim majority district, was also claimed by Congress on the basis of 'other factors'. It was pointed out that Gurdaspur was part of the Sikh-dominated 'Manjha' tract, and that 'the whole system of communications, i.e., railways, roads, telegraph, telephone, hydro-electric wires, of the Kangra district, passes through the district'. Furthermore, the economic interests of this district were mainly non-Muslim and the Sikhs had one of their holiest shrines, the famous Kartarpur shrine, there.[30] The Congress demand was clearly aimed at securing for East Punjab the bulk of Punjab's irrigated land, the irrigation headworks and canals of the Punjab.

The implications of a partition of the Punjab on the basis of contiguous areas of Muslim and non-Muslim districts as provided by the 3 June Plan were very grim for Sikhs. Concentrated in the central divisions of Lahore and Jullundur, Sikhs would be split down the middle should a partition line be drawn on the basis of Muslim and non-Muslim majority districts; Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan divisions, all Muslim majority areas but with half a million Sikhs, and many of Sikhism's most sacred places, including the birthplace of Guru Nanak, would go to Pakistan. The fertile colony lands in the south-western districts of Montgomery and Lyallpur would certainly be lost to the Muslims once a partition on population basis was effected. Having pushed for partition, Sikh leaders were quick to point out that the only partition line acceptable to the community would be along the Chenab river.

Sikh representatives submitted a lengthy memorandum to the Boundary Commission, arguing for inclusion into eastern Punjab of portions of Muslim majority districts including significant portions of Lahore, Lyallpur, Gujranwala and Sialkot. They claimed that these regions should rightly be given to Sikhs in consideration of land revenue paid by Sikh peasants who farmed the land there, and the situation of Sikh historical and religious sites and landholdings of Sikhs in those areas.[31] Desperately aware that the fate of the community rested on the decision of the Boundary Commission, Sikhs did all they could to impress upon the Boundary Commission that 'any partition that did not secure the integrity and solidarity of the Sikhs would be unacceptable and would create a

difficult situation'.[32] The Governor's office in Lahore was flooded with calls from Sikh representatives, asking that Nankana Sahib be conceded to the community, at least one canal system from Montgomery district be left in eastern Punjab, and arrangements be made to transfer Sikhs from western to eastern Punjab. The Sikhs were told that there was little the Governor could do for them. Partition had been conceded at their request; the fate of the community now hung on the findings of the Boundary Commission.[33]

The submissions and arguments of the three major communities in the Punjab were based on different interpretations of the Boundary Commission's terms of reference as set by the 3 June Plan. The Commission was simply instructed to 'demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. In doing so, it will also take into account other factors'. Muslims had demanded that the boundary be based on the basic principle of 'majority contiguous areas', while the Congress and Sikhs argued that a counting of heads alone must not be allowed to override the more important consideration of 'other factors', of which non-Muslim communities in the Punjab could lay claim to many. Mountbatten too received his fair share of memoranda from the representatives of the three communities, suggesting that he influence the decision of the Commission. But throughout the course of the Boundary Commission's work, Mountbatten made a conscious effort to project the image that he did not intend to influence its findings, though evidence suggests that there had indeed been consultations between Radcliffe and Mountbatten over the boundary question. The extent of the influence, however, remains inconclusive. Mountbatten's responses to the personal notes he received from Nehru, Liaquat Ali Khan and the Maharaja of Patiala were similar;[34] he was not prepared to do anything that would prejudice the independent working of the Boundary Commission.[35] It was now up to Radcliffe and the Commission to decide how to reconcile these divergent and conflicting demands, and to come up with an agreed decision as to the demarcation of boundaries.

IV

If Radcliffe had hoped for consensus from his colleagues of the Commission on an agreed boundary, he was to be disappointed. As the Commission retired to Simla after the close of public hearings, the chairman found that the 'divergence of opinion [amongst the members

of the Commission] was so wide that an agreed solution to the boundary problem was not to be obtained'.[36] In his report to the Viceroy, Radcliffe pointed out that 'differences of opinion as to the significance of the term "other factors", which we were directed by our terms of reference to take into account, and as to the weight and value to be attached to those factors, made it impossible to arrive at any agreed line'.[37] Faced with the conflicting cases put forward by the members of the Commission, Radcliffe was left very much on his own to decide on the boundaries.

As Radcliffe himself saw it, the main difficulty lay in interpreting the meaning of the term 'other factors', and the relative weight and importance to be attached to those vis-à-vis the principle of majority contiguous areas. The term 'other factors' had been left extremely vague, and thus became subject to conflicting interpretations. Both Congress and Sikh representatives had used these in the widest possible way to argue for the inclusion of Muslim majority areas into East Punjab.

Although the claims of the various parties extended over a wide range of territory in the Punjab, Radcliffe narrowed the disputed and 'debatable' areas to 'lie in and around the areas between the Beas and Sutlej Rivers on the one hand and the Ravi on the other'. This area in central Punjab covered the districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur and Jullundur. These districts presented special problems because of their complex demographic make-up, with Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus more or less equally spread out over the various tehsils. The area was also bound by an integral system of canals, 'so vital to the life of the Punjab but developed only under the conception of a single administration . . . and of system of road and rail communication, which had been planned in the same way'. Situated in this disputed area were Lahore and Amritsar, the two most important cities in the Punjab, which both Muslim and non-Muslim communities had vigorously laid claim too.[38]

In delimiting the boundary in the Punjab, Radcliffe for the most part applied the principle of majority contiguous areas. With the exception of Lahore and Gurdaspur, all Muslim majority districts were allotted to West Punjab. The 13 non-Muslim districts of Jullundur and Ambala divisions, including Amritsar district, Pathankot, Gurdaspur and Batala tehsils of Gurdaspur district and a part of Kasur tehsil of Lahore district went to East Punjab.

In some cases, Radcliffe allowed 'other factors' to override the communal criterion. Lahore district was an example. The district and tehsils that comprised it all had Muslim majority population. The award boundary

however meandered diagonally across Kasur tehsil, and the south-east half of it was shorn away and given to East Punjab, possibly to minimise disruptions to railways, communications and water systems. The district of Amritsar, on the other hand, which had a bare majority of non-Muslims (53.5 per cent) was allotted in its entirety to East Punjab despite the fact that its northern tehsil, Ajnala, had a Muslim majority population. The third district, Gurdaspur, was another example of inconsistency in Radcliffe's application of the criteria used for the determining of boundaries. As in Lahore, Muslims formed a bare majority in Gurdaspur as a whole (50.2 per cent). All four tehsils forming the district too had clear Muslim majorities. Yet the award boundary allotted to India the whole of Gurdaspur, Batala and Pathankot tehsils, and a slice of Shakargarh tehsil.

The award of the major part of Gurdaspur district to India was perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Radcliffe Boundary. It was generally believed that the Gurdaspur award was made to provide India with access to Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan alleged that this was an instance where Radcliffe may have been influenced by Mountbatten, who was unhappy with Jinnah's refusal to offer him the post of Pakistan's first Governor-General.[39] But, as Michel pointed out, although the strategic importance of Gurdaspur as a link between East Punjab and Kashmir cannot be overlooked, linking the Gurdaspur award to the Kashmir situation may represent ex post facto reasoning as up to October 1947; no one expected Kashmir not to accede to Pakistan in deference to the wishes of its overwhelming Muslim majority population.[40] Rather, the problem with the Gurdaspur award was that Radcliffe arbitrarily used a mixture of factors—communal, irrigation, communication and 'other factors'—to determine where the boundary would fall. It was this inconsistency that caught many people by surprise when the award was announced.

In the submission of the boundary award to the Viceroy, Radcliffe pointed out that he was 'conscious that there would be legitimate criticisms to his decision of the boundary as there would bound to be concerning any other line that would be chosen'. He knew only too well that his had been a butcher's, not a surgeon's, operation. In this, Radcliffe was right. His award pleased no one. The *Hindustan Standard* of Delhi called it 'self-contradictory, anomalous and arbitrary,' while the Muslim League organ, the *Dawn*, attacked it as 'territorial murder', a 'biased decision' and an 'act of shameful partiality'.[41] Mountbatten had received the award on 12 August 1947. But he decided to announce it

only after Independence Day, on 16 August. He had seen Radcliffe's report, and he realised instantly that the awarded boundary 'would cause anguish to many millions of people on one side or the other of the new frontier, and [be] unsatisfactory to both governments'. He had therefore decided to hold the award until after the independence of India and Pakistan had been declared, so that the day of 'rejoicing and reconciliation' would not be marred.

This decision to delay the publication of the award could have contributed to the violence and widespread destruction that followed partition. First, repeated warnings by the Governor of Punjab for advance information to be made available so that troops could be deployed in the affected areas were vindicated when the provincial administration and boundary force seemed caught by surprise by the unexpected turn of events when the award was announced. Had the Punjab government been told of the boundary line earlier so that troops could be committed to potential trouble spots, the extent of disturbances could have been considerably curtailed. Second, the delayed announcement of the award caught many people, especially in the central districts, by surprise when they found that they were on the wrong side of the border after 16 August 1947. There were neither provisions nor preparations for the affected populations to be moved, until it was too late. Mountbatten and his British officers were aware that there would inevitably be displacements of population, but felt that they would be 'on a relatively minor scale, and spread over a long period'.[42] The magnitude of disruptions caused by the boundary award, however, far exceeded this original estimate.

V

In many ways, the boundary that bisected the Punjab was an illogical and problematic one. Radcliffe did not follow a consistent principle in determining the boundary that would cut across the Punjab. In the main, he adopted a demographic principle, but applied it inconsistently. In some cases, he would include an entire district in Pakistan because the district had a Muslim majority population; in other cases, as in Lahore and Gurdaspur, he would divide the demographic majority at the tehsil level. This inconsistency was in part the outcome of the very vague terms of reference. Although it was stated that the partition of the province would be done on the basis of 'contiguous Muslim majority areas', the terms of reference did not spell out explicitly if the principle of communal

majority would be applied at district or tehsil level. Thus the Muslims claimed for Pakistan tehsils from non-Muslim majority districts on account of Muslim majority population. The boundary therefore proved extremely disruptive in districts of central Punjab, where the communal balance was even.

The awarded boundary gave West Punjab an area of nearly 63,000 square miles, and a population of about 16 million, of which about 4 million, or 25 per cent was non-Muslim. East Punjab acquired an area of some 37,000 square miles and a population of about 12.5 million of which 4.4 million, or more than 35 per cent, was Muslim. The resultant Punjab boundary dividing West and East Punjab actually created Muslim enclaves in the territory awarded to India and vice versa, left large blocs of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan.

Of the communities in the Punjab, the Sikhs were hardest hit by the boundary. With the boundary splitting the Punjab down the middle, the Sikh community was bifurcated, with nearly 2 million left on the wrong side of the border. In many ways, this was not unexpected. Indeed, there was little in the 3 June Plan that gave cause for the Sikhs to be sanguine that the ultimate line of division would be drawn in their favour. The provisional boundary had divided the province between Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority districts. And while they had hoped that the Boundary Commission's decision would be kind to them, the Sikhs were indeed wary that the final boundary would not depart very much from the provisional line. Mountbatten had made it quite clear that 'it would indeed require a miracle to keep the Sikh community intact'.[43] The Sikhs were too scattered in the Punjab and although they formed 10 per cent of the population in eight districts west of the Beas–Sutlej, Muslims dominated in six of these districts. By 16 August, Sikhs, especially those in Muslim majority districts, were confused and concerned; they were not sure whether they were now on Pakistani or Indian territory. And as confusion, fear and anxiety set in, 'the alert went from one Sikh settlement to the next'. Frustrated by the turn of events and craving for revenge on Muslims who had left them in such a state, Sikhs started to make plans on their own. They had been preparing for some weeks now. Sikh *jathas* were being organised, militias strengthened and weapons stockpiled, and recruitment drives for private Sikh armies were rampant in Sikh villages throughout the Punjab.

The Governor of Punjab, Evan Jenkins, had warned the Viceroy that Sikhs were getting ready for a showdown with Muslims. Jenkins had

earlier asked for some indication of the boundary line so that preparations could be made for such an eventuality.[44] Despite these warnings, Mountbatten chose to do nothing. He decided not to aggravate matters by arresting suspected Sikh leaders at this juncture, preferring to pin his hopes on the Punjab Boundary Force. But as events turned out, the 23,000-strong Boundary Force could do little against the dispersed but coordinated attacks by Sikh jathas on Muslim villages in East Punjab, and unescorted Muslim refugees fleeing across the frontier. These well-organised jathas operated almost with impunity in the new border areas of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur and Jullundur. While Sikhs exacted revenge on hapless Muslims in East Punjab, Sikhs of West Punjab were forced to flee their homeland in the face of Muslim reprisals.[45] There was a general atmosphere of apprehension and fear in the newly constituted countries on both sides of the border. As J. Nanda described:

> The declaration of the Boundary Commission Award shook the confidence of the minority which found itself in 'other homelands', physical violence only completed the process of demobilisation. Even though defence was difficult, particularly in the case of the partiality of the police and the military, the minorities, in most cases, did not even try to hold to their 'pockets'. In a lightning flash, it came to them that the game was up; everything seemed alien to them, the civil administration, the police, the army; even their homes frightened them as a potential prison or slaughter house; the assassin's knife was receiving a fresh edge on the stone; the fire-raising brigade might be at the door any minute. As the instinct of self-preservation was roused the attachment to earthy possessions suddenly became atrophied. In the countryside, an anxious call pierced the still summer air like a fire-ball in the night. 'To the border!' In the twinkling of an eye, an interminable queue of carts and cattle, men, women, children form on the road leading to the frontier.[46]

The Radcliffe line, no matter where it was drawn, was bound to damage the integrity of the province's irrigation system, which had been designed and built as a unitary system under unified control. But by cutting across the interfluvial region between the Sutlej and Ravi rivers in the way that was provided by the award, the boundary essentially 'destroyed the unity of the irrigated systems by severing the canals from their headworks'. For instance, West Punjab was left with an area

that depended on the tail branches of the Upper Bari Doab Canal which takes water from the Ravi in east Punjab.[47] Two canal headworks were allotted to India, although the bulk of the areas irrigated by the canals from the headworks was mainly awarded to Pakistan. For instance, the Dipalpur Canal, which irrigated Lahore and Montgomery districts, which under the boundary award were placed in Pakistan, received its water from the Ferozepur weir, which was allotted to East Punjab. Similarly, the Sulaimanke weir, which controlled water entering the Pakpatten Canal in Montgomery and Multan districts in Pakistan found itself in no-man's land at partition as adjustments to the border were still undergoing negotiation. The headwork was in Pakistan, but its protective embankments, which were an essential part of the headworks, were in Ferozepur in East Punjab.[48]

The communal war that had erupted around the central districts of the Punjab and the movements of people under the most distressing conditions led to an all-round dislocation of the administrative machinery and transport systems, plunging the new border areas into complete chaos. The once thriving towns and villages in central Punjab, which were a hive of commercial activities, were now reduced to frontier towns, whose whole economic and social structure was thoroughly dislocated as a result of disruption to the transport systems, sources of labour supply, raw materials and finance. The town of Batala, in which an exclusively Muslim-owned and worked iron and steel industry had flourished, found itself on the wrong side of the border, and with the exodus of Muslim workers in the wake of communal violence, the entire industry came to a virtual standstill after partition.[49]

VI

The desire of the British to rapidly disengage from the subcontinent once the decision was made to decolonise, created a rather tight schedule in which to complete the transfer of power. Mountbatten's plan for the partition of the subcontinent into two states of India and Pakistan was agreed upon by 3 June 1947, but before the two states could come into being, boundaries had to be drawn both in the Punjab and Bengal, to demarcate the frontiers between India and the new state of Pakistan. The task of drawing the boundaries was given to two Boundary Commissions, one for the Punjab, the other, Bengal. Both were to be chaired by a retired English barrister, especially flown in for the job. Sir Cyril Radcliffe arrived in Delhi on 8 July 1947. He was given no more than

six weeks in which to complete his task of dividing two great provinces, the character and composition of which the barrister knew nothing of before he arrived in Delhi. In the case of the Punjab, not unexpectedly, the Boundary Commission, whose terms of reference were vague and at times contradictory, received divergent and conflicting claims from the various communities in the Punjab, each hoping to influence the boundary in its favour. The composition of the Commission did not help matters; with two Muslim and two non-Muslim members, the interests and opinions of the Commission were evenly divided. Consequently, the demarcation of the boundary of the Punjab boiled down to the decisions of one man, its chairman. The Radcliffe Award, a six-para document describing the dividing line between East and West Punjab, 'wobbled from communal to economic to strategic' factors,[50] followed no natural dividing features such as rivers or mountain ranges, cut across villages, canal systems, communication lines, in the process separating communities and bisecting homes. The upshot was that large blocs of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs found themselves left on the wrong side of the border. The eventual boundary, made known only after independence was declared, generated confusion, fear and anxiety. What ensued were mutual massacres, driven by intense hatred and bloodthirsty revenge; millions fled their homes in fear, thus setting off one of the largest and quickest mass migrations in history.

Notes

1. Partition brought in its wake massive demographic shifts, displacing an estimated 12 million people. The newly created republics faced unprecedented challenges relating to resettlement and reconstruction. It also contributed in many ways to generating regional tensions and cross-border conflicts in the subcontinent. The conflict in Kashmir is a lingering legacy of partition. In a sense, almost 50 years on, the full story of partition is still unfolding.
2. Stanley Waterman, 'Partitioned States', *Political Geography Quarterly*, 6, 2 (April 1987), 151–70.
3. See Reg Herschy, *Disputed Frontiers: A Prelude to Conflict?* (Sussex: Lewes, 1994).
4. For studies on the impact of partition, see Swarna Aiyar, 'August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947' and Gyanesh Kudaisya, 'The Demographic Upheaval of Partition: Refugees and Agricultural Resettlement in India, 1947–67', *South Asia*, special issue, 18 (1995), 13–36 and 73–94 respectively.
5. Quoted in *Millions on the Move: The Aftermath of Partition* (Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, n.d.), 1.
6. See Imran Ali, 'The Punjab and the Retardation of Nationalism', in D.A. Low (ed.),

The Political Inheritance of Pakistan (London, 1991) and Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement: The Growth of the Muslim League in Northwest and Northeast India, 1937–47* (Karachi, 1985), 82–113.

7. N.N. Mitra (ed.), *Indian Annual Register* (Calcutta, 1946), vol. 1, 230.
8. Ibid. (1947), vol. 1, 118–19.
9. Resolution of Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal, 16 April 1947, in Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Select Documents on the Partition of Punjab, 1947: India and Pakistan* (Delhi, 1991), (hereafter *Select Documents*), 42–43.
10. Letter from Hindu and Sikh MLCs to Nehru, 2 April 1947, in N. Mansergh and E.W.R. Lumby (eds), *Constitutional Relations between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942–47* (London, 1981), (hereafter *TP*), vol. 10, 88.
11. Statement of 3 June Plan, 3 June 1947, in *TP*, vol. 11, 94–101; texts of broadcasts by Nehru, Jinnah and Baldev Singh, in ibid., 94–101.
12. Fortnightly Report from Jenkins to Mountbatten, 15 June 1947, in Mian Muhammad Sadullah et al., *The Partition of the Punjab, 1947: A Compilation of Official Documents* (Lahore, 1993), vol. 1, 41–42.
13. The western Punjab section of the Punjab Assembly voted against partition of the province by 69 against 27 votes, whilst the eastern Punjab section, meeting separately, decided in favour of the partition of the Punjab by 50 against 22 votes.
14. Statement of 3 June Plan, para 9, in *TP*, vol. 11, 94.
15. Mountbatten to Listowel, 9 June 1947, in ibid., 226.
16. Listowel to Mountbatten, 13 June 1947, in ibid., 380.
17. Minutes of Viceroy's miscellaneous meeting, in ibid., 328.
18. The non-Muslim and Muslim members of the Punjab Boundary Commission were nominated by the Congress and Muslim League accordingly. They were accepted by Mountbatten without debate. Nehru to Mountbatten, 15 June 1947, and Jinnah to Mountbatten, 24 June 1947, in Sadullah et al., *The Partition of the Punjab, 1947*, vol. 1, 42 and 55.
19. Extracts of Proceedings of the Special Committee of the Cabinet, 26 June 1947, in ibid., 64.
20. Cyril Radcliffe was educated at Haileybury and Oxford. He was a Fellow at All Souls College and was called to the Bar at Inn Temple in 1924. During the Second World War, Radcliffe held various appointments in the Ministry of Information of which he was Director-General when the War ended. Based on biographical data submitted by A.H. Joyce to Campbell Johnson, 3 July 1947, for release to Indian press. See ibid., 99.
21. Listowel to Mountbatten, 13 June 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 336.
22. Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* (London, 1985), 402.
23. Abbott I.D. Scott, telegram dated 5 July 1947, in *TP*, vol. 11, 931.
24. Oskar Spate, *On the Margins of History: From the Punjab to Fiji* (Canberra, 1991), 53.
25. Leonard Mosley, *Last Days of the Raj* (London, 1961), 195.
26. Viceroy's Personal Report no. 12, 11 July 1947, in *TP*, vol. 12, 93.
27. Abbott to Abell, 16 July 1947, in ibid., 191.

28. Mountbatten to Radcliffe, 22 July 1947, and Radcliffe to Mountbatten, 23 July 1947, in ibid., 291, 305.
29. See Report of Mr Justice Din Mohammed, 5 August 1947, in *Select Documents*, 374–406.
30. Report of Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan, 3 August 1947, in ibid., 310–41.
31. 'Sikh Memorandum to the Punjab Boundary Commission', July 1947, in Sadullah et al., *The Partition of the Punjab, 1947*, vol. 1, 347–97.
32. Reuter Indian Report, 8 July 1947, in *TP*, vol. 12, 17.
33. For Sikh responses to the boundary-making process in Punjab, see Tan Tai Yong, 'Prelude to Partition: Sikh Responses to the Demand for Pakistan, 1940–47', in *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 1, 2 (1994), 186–90.
34. See, for instance, Larry Collins and Dominic Lappierre, *Mountbatten and the Partition of India* (Colombo, 1982), 70; and M.N. Das, *Partition and Independence of India* (New Delhi, 1982), 142 and 151.
35. See, for instance, Mountbatten to the Maharaja of Bikaner, 11 August 1947, in *TP*, vol. 12, 662.
36. Report by Cyril Radcliffe, 12 August 1947, *TP*, vol. 12, 745.
37. Ibid.
38. The Radcliffe Report, 12 August 1947, in *TP*, vol. 12, 744–49.
39. A.A. Michel, *The Indus Rivers: A Study of the Effects of Partition* (London, 1967), 191.
40. Ibid.
41. Satya Rai, *Punjab since Independence*, (London, 1965), 77.
42. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, 403.
43. Mountbatten's Broadcast, 3 June 1947, in *Select Documents*, 51.
44. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 7 June 1947, *TP*, vol. 11, 194–95; Jenkins to Mountbatten, 10 July 1947, *TP*, vol. 13, 71–74.
45. Note by Field Marshall Sir C. Auchinleck, 15 August 1947, in *TP*, vol. 12, 734–37.
46. J. Nanda, *Punjab Uprooted: A Survey of the Punjab Riots and Rehabilitation Problems* (Bombay, 1948), 52–53.
47. F.J. Fowler, 'Some Problems of Water Distribution between East and West Punjab', *The Geographical Review*, 49, 4 (October 1950), 586–87.
48. For studies on the effects of partition on the irrigation networks of Punjab, see A.A. Michel, *The Indus Rivers: A Study of the Effects of Partition* (London, 1967) and A. Tayyeb, *Pakistan: A Political Geography* (London, 1966).
49. K.L. Luthra, *Impact of Partition on Industries in the Border Districts of East Punjab* (published by the Board of Economic Inquiry, East Punjab, n.d.).
50. Spate, *On the Margins of History*, 58.

Partition, Migration and Assimilation: A Comparative Study of Pakistani Punjab

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This article introduces a comparative analysis to the partition of Punjab which accompanied the emergence of Pakistan. It explains why the partition of the Punjab was more controversial than that of Bengal, before taking up another comparative dimension of the different post-Independence experiences of migrant communities which settled in West Punjab and Sindh. Finally, it considers the role of the two partitioned Punjabs in the political life of Pakistan and India after 1947.

This article seeks to introduce a comparative analysis to the partition of Punjab which accompanied the emergence of Pakistan. It plans to focus initially on the controversy about the partition plan in Punjab, communal disturbances and the migration. The phenomenon of migration represents one of the most violent processes of ethnic cleansing in recent history. This was effected through a mass movement of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims across the new international borders dividing the two successor states of British India in 1947. The magnitude and character of cross-migration in Punjab differed from its counterpart in Bengal, with the result that the pattern of demographic changes through the process of refugee rehabilitation and ascendancy of migrants in the new state system also differed in the two provinces. In Pakistan, the partition of Punjab turned out to be politically far more significant than the partition of Bengal in as much as it determined political attitudes towards India, composition of the governing elite and commitment to the cause of Kashmir. Not only was the partition of Punjab far

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more controversial than the latter, it also grossly differed in magnitude because, in the immediate aftermath of the partition, 73 per cent of migrants from India landed in Punjab while only 9 per cent of them came to East Bengal. The political fallout of the gruesome process of partition and migration needs to be discussed in terms of the emergent political attitudes of West Punjab vis-à-vis India, Islamic solidarity, national security and foreign policy.

While the two partitions provide a basis for comparative study in terms of their impact on the post-Independence politics of Punjab and Bengal, respectively as well as on the state of Pakistan in general, another comparative framework is provided by the way migrant communities in the two provinces of Pakistan—Punjab and Sindh—interacted with their host societies. It is hereby argued that significant differences existed between the two waves of migration in terms of both internal composition of the migrant community and patterns of its settlement. West Punjab provides a unique example of relative assimilation of more than 5 million migrants which constituted one-fourth of the population in the province after the process of migration came to an end. This contrasted with the situation in Sindh where it was the non-assimilation of migrants in local society which represented the dominant pattern. Thus we plan to focus on the way migrants from East Punjab were relatively integrated in West Punjab within a generation on the one hand and the way their counterparts from elsewhere in India remained generally unassimilated in Sindh.

Finally, we shall argue that West Punjab in Pakistan developed certain modes of political behaviour after 1947 which stood in direct contrast to political developments in East Punjab in India. The partition led to inherently different political processes in the two parts of the divided province. This brings in the question of positioning of a province in the country in political, religious, demographic and economic terms. While the Pakistani Punjab moved to centrestage in the state of Pakistan in terms of military, bureaucratic and economic power, the Indian Punjab moved away from the centre and produced a militant Sikh nationalist movement after a generation. The purpose of enquiry here is to locate the origins of political development in West Punjab as it fundamentally differed from its counterpart in India within the larger frameworks of their respective political systems.

Partition of Punjab: A Legacy of Perceived Injustice

Muslims of India sought to resolve their political dilemma as a permanent minority in the face of the expanding majoritarian democracy in British India through partition. Their cherished homeland was to be established on the territory of Muslim majority provinces. Viceroy Mountbatten announced the partition plan on 3 June 1947 which included the scheme for partition of the two provinces of Punjab and Bengal. Muslims did not want partition of these provinces but Hindus and Sikhs vehemently demanded it. As Mountbatten aptly remarked, the Congress used the same argument for demanding the partition of provinces as the Muslim League used for demanding the partition of India. The idea was that neither Muslims nor Hindus nor Sikhs wanted 'to live against their will under a Government in which another community has a majority and the only alternative to coercion is partition'.[1] Not surprisingly the West Punjab assembly representing Muslim majority districts voted against partition 69 to 27 while the East Punjab assembly representing non-Muslim majority districts voted for it 50 to 22. Similarly, members of the Bengal assembly belonging to Muslim majority districts rejected partition 106 to 35 while their counterparts from Hindu majority districts voted for it 58 to 21. This was followed by formation of two boundary commissions for Punjab and Bengal.

The Radcliffe Award on the partition of Punjab, which was announced three days after partition, shocked public opinion in Pakistan. Earlier, a 'notional' award was contained within the Second Schedule of the Indian Independence Act which had actually allocated Muslim majority areas such as Gurdaspur district to Pakistan. The award was widely condemned in Pakistan as partisan and 'a deliberate perversity of justice'.[2] It led to a permanent sense of injury in Pakistan at the hands of Lord Mountbatten, Sir Radcliffe as well as Indian authorities in general who were perceived to have manipulated the award in their own favour. The Pakistani sense of injustice over rendering of certain Muslim majority areas to India was compounded by the fact that these areas provided access to the state of Jammu and Kashmir and thus involved issues relating to larger factors operating outside Punjab. It has been suggested that Sir Radcliffe was offered a fait accompli by Lord Mountbatten and his assistant V.P. Menon to announce an award which was more geopolitical than judicious in nature.[3] The fact that India and Pakistan entered into bitter dispute over Kashmir immediately after partition and that the Radcliffe Award was considered by Pakistanis to be part of

the Indian conspiracy to secure practicable access to Kashmir points to the extra-local nature of the controversy. Books written on Kashmir typically carry a discussion of the Radcliffe Award and the way it was widely understood in the strategic context of linking India with the Himalayan state.[4] Indeed Kashmir and defence of Pakistan have been closely linked in the national consciousness of Pakistan.[5] In other words, it was not merely a Punjab question. Instead, there was a sense of loss throughout Pakistan attached to the way the partition of Punjab was brought about which was feared to have put the country at a disadvantage vis-à-vis its stand on Kashmir.

A major factor which complicated the Punjab scene was the Sikh question. The Sikhs did not constitute a majority in any district of Punjab. Their population did not exceed 14 per cent in the whole of the province. Obviously they stressed 'other factors' such as their substantial role in the agricultural life of canal colonies and the relatively high ratio of land revenue paid by them, which was 46 per cent in Lahore division alone.[6] Justice Teja Singh, the Sikh representative on the Punjab Boundary Commission, stressed 'the necessity of preserving the solidarity and integrity of the Sikh community and the situation of their shrines'.[7] He pointed to the 'special circumstances of [the] Sikh community in the Punjab' which needed to be taken into account in addition to the factor of population as per terms of reference of the Commission.[8] The Sikhs had over the years projected a political profile which was separate from the two communities of Hindus and Muslims. They had floated the idea of 'Azad Punjab' in 1942 and Sikhistan in 1944, and later demanded constitutional guarantees for Sikhs in case India was not divided but an independent Sikh state if India was partitioned.[9] It has been suggested that 'the Sikh problem' was always kept in mind when Mountbatten communicated with Radcliffe, Governor of Punjab Jenkins and other colleagues on such issues as inclusion of Ferozepur and Zira *tehsils*—which contained a large Sikh minority—in Pakistan, postponement of publication of the Radcliffe Award for fear of the anticipated hostile reaction of Sikhs and, interestingly, the need to show more generosity to Pakistan in Bengal which had no Sikh problem than in Punjab.[10] As a consequence, the Punjab Boundary Commission produced an award which turned out to be extremely controversial as far as Muslims of Punjab and Pakistan were concerned.

As opposed to this, the partition of Bengal was far less controversial. Of course, Muslims expressed their grievance over the fact that the Muslim majority district of Murshidabad was not included in Pakistan

and certain parts of other districts such as Nadia and Jessore had been transferred to India. On the other hand, the Chittagong Hill Tracts with its predominant Buddhist population was included in Pakistan, because the area was completely isolated from West Bengal and depended for its economic survival on East Bengal.[11] Criticism of the Radcliffe Award on the partition of Bengal was confined to the unsocial and ugly line of demarcation passing through historically established localities. There was nowhere near the national outcry in Pakistan over the Punjab partition in terms of both intensity of feelings in the short run and potential to shape political attitudes at the provincial and national levels in the long run.

Apart from the controversy about demarcation, the partition of Punjab involved a high level of organised violence which was unparalleled elsewhere in India, especially Bengal. Violence related to migration as a push factor involving arson, murder and rape. Accounts of vandalism, attacks on trains carrying refugees across the border and uncivil behaviour of one community against the other reflect partisan views depending on whether the victims were Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims. There is no doubt that all communities were ready to perpetrate violence on their perceived enemies given the opportunity and resources. However, what concerns us here is that the level of communal violence in Punjab was much higher than in other provinces of India. About half a million people died within a few months surrounding partition. The pattern of violence in Punjab, especially in the form of attacks on refugee trains, was characterised by 'the use of military tactics', 'the methodical and systematic manner', 'a high degree of planning and organisation' and 'military precision with one half of the gang providing covering fire while the others entered the train to kill'.[12] The fact that Punjab was the premier recruitment area was responsible for general militarisation of the society. At the beginning of the Second World War, 48 per cent of the Indian army comprised men from Punjab, meaning that one out of three able-bodied men between the ages of 17 and 30 in Punjab and one out of two in Rawalpindi district belonged to the army.[13] A relatively high level of group solidarity in a situation of confrontation characterised communal strife in Punjab, especially on the side of Sikhs. The 1919 Montague–Chelmsford Reforms ensured that the 'martial castes' of Punjab constituted a majority of the electorate in the recruitment area and, as a consequence, occupied patterns of leadership in the locality.[14] At the end of the Second World War, the large demobilised soldiery of Punjab mainly belonging to Sikh and Muslim communities perpetrated

violence of all kinds on each other. Many ex-servicemen carried weapons with them which enhanced their power to inflict damage on the rival community because of their professional training in the use of arms and fresh experience on the war front. Attacks on non-Muslims in Attock district were reportedly led by retired Muslim army officers.[15] The Darbar Sahib Committee based in Amritsar similarly employed ex-soldiers.[16] It was observed that Sikhs were generally well organised in their efforts to inflict maximum damage on the departing Muslims. Akali *jathas* were organised in many districts. An Akali Fauj was also recruited and organisations like Shahidi Dal, SGPC Fauji Guard, Tarna Dal, Budha Dal, Dashmesh Dal and Naujawan Singh Sabha mushroomed in an effort to prepare for civil war.[17] Similarly, the Muslim National Guards were involved in organised acts of communal violence.[18] As opposed to this pattern of organised violence in Punjab, the scene in Bengal was characterised by sporadic and relatively unplanned violence.

A closely related phenomenon in Punjab was the deep commitment with which religious minorities were harassed and pushed across borders by religious majorities, ostensibly to put an end to religious pluralism. It was this vision of a society based exclusively on one's own religion which led to extreme cases of violence in the province. Indeed, there were revivalist movements among all the three religious communities during the first half of the twentieth century, led by the Arya Samaj among Hindus, Singh Sabha among Sikhs and Ahrar among Muslims. These organisations caused reification of identities through such movements as Shuddhi (purification), Gurdawara reform and Tabligh (prosyletisation) respectively. However, Sikh revivalism displayed a quantum of political dynamism which was unrivalled by other communities not the least because the relatively egalitarian structure of the Sikh community provided a greater scope for collective action.[19] This potential found vehement expression during the partition when the acute minority status of Sikhs in both parts of the divided province led them to concentrate on a strategy of consolidating their position in East Punjab.

The ultimate goal of the Sikh community was conceived in terms of establishment of a Sikh state in Punjab. Not surprisingly, the pattern of organised violence on the Sikh side drew upon a common source of inspiration in the form of what was understood as a project for a federation of Sikh states and districts of Punjab under the leadership of Patiala state.[20] The official view on the Pakistan side was that the killings of Muslims at the hands of Sikhs in August were part of the plan to liquidate the entire Muslim population of East Punjab and bring

in Sikhs from West Punjab in order to lay claims for the formation of a Sikh state adjoining the states of Patiala, Faridkot and others.[21] The Punjab Governor, Evan Jenkins claimed to have noticed a similar commitment among Muslims of West Punjab, especially in the Rawalpindi division, to exterminate non-Muslims from their districts.[22] This tendency on both sides led to a pattern of complete migration of religious minorities, Muslims from East Punjab and Hindus and Sikhs from West Punjab. This differed from the pattern in Bengal where minority communities continued to live in the shadow of majority communities even as communal hatred led to selective killings on both sides and pushed migrants across the border in steady waves. The partition had left 42 per cent of the non-Muslim population of Bengal, i.e., 12 million Hindus, on the Pakistan side.[23] The better placed Hindus looked towards Calcutta as a safe haven and continued to migrate to India for a generation.

Table 1

The Two Partitions

Punjab	*Bengal*
Controversial	Non-controversial
National tragedy	Local problem
Organised violence	Sporadic violence
Total migration	Selective migration

The deterministic potential of the partition of Punjab on emerging relations between India and Pakistan cannot be overstated. The deep sense of injustice among Pakistanis vis-à-vis the Radcliffe Award created a legacy of hatred against India, especially as it was directly related with the Kashmir dispute. Also, communal riots surrounding migration created an atmosphere which made large sections of Muslims deeply suspicious of Hindus and Sikhs with consequences for constitution making in future. This was reflected in the demand for an Islamic character to the constitution and a provision for separate electorates for minorities. The difference between the political attitudes of the Punjabis and Bengalis vis-à-vis non-Muslims can be traced to the fact that migration in Punjab was total in character leaving no trace of Hindus or Sikhs in West Punjab while migration in Bengal was selective in nature leaving a large Hindu minority in place in East Bengal.

Punjab: From Migration to Assimilation

West Punjab presents a unique example of general assimilation of a huge migrant community in the host society within a relatively short period of time. The partition of India was geographically effected through the partitions of Punjab and Bengal whereby a large number of people fled across borders due to communal disturbances. However, the partition of India also had a distinct character of its own whereby whole provinces were included in one country or the other in addition to the two provincial partitions. It was characterised by a slow-moving, selective and voluntary process of migration from various areas other than Punjab and Bengal in India to the province of Sindh in Pakistan. While West Punjab presented a scene of immediate and en masse migration as a direct result of breakdown of communal relations, Sindh presented a scenario where migrants continued to come for a generation. Migration in Punjab directly related to the issue of physical security of Muslims in East Punjab when they found themselves on the wrong side of the border after the announcement of the Radcliffe Award in the midst of communal riots. As opposed to this, migration in Sindh came about essentially due to ideological and political reasons as well as the pull of the new job opportunities. Not surprisingly, the latter migrants developed a perspective on social and political issues which was different from that of their compatriots in Punjab.

The two cases of Punjab and Sindh represent the two models of assimilation and non-assimilation respectively. The Punjab accommodated 5.3 million refugees, which accounted for 25.6 per cent of its population.[24] Thus every fourth person in West Punjab was a refugee from across the border. Refugees were dispersed in a large number of villages, towns and cities. They profoundly influenced the local population in terms of a heightened sense of insecurity vis-à-vis India and relatively enhanced consciousness about Islam. This process was facilitated by the fact that both migrants and locals shared the linguistic and cultural traditions. Almost all refugees in Punjab were Punjabi-speaking while refugees in Sindh were not Sindhi-speaking. Similarly, refugees in Punjab typically belonged to one Punjabi-speaking community, but refugees in Sindh spoke a variety of languages including Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati and Kutchhi. The place of origin of refugees in India was a significant factor in their prospects of assimilation in the host society. In Punjab, 97.5 per cent refugees came from the north-west zone, comprising essentially East Punjab—which was geographically

contiguous with and culturally similar to West Punjab—in addition to Ajmer, Delhi, Rajputana states and Jammu and Kashmir.[25] But the migrant community of Sindh was totally non-Sindhi in ethnic, linguistic and geographical terms. This represented a radical break with the situation in Punjab. In Sindh (excluding Karachi), out of 540,278 refugees, 30 per cent came from East Punjab, 21.7 per cent from UP and 25.6 per cent from Rajputana states along with small pockets from Ajmer, Bombay, Delhi, CP and Bihar.[26] Similarly, out of 616,900 refugees in Karachi, 35 per cent came from East Punjab and adjacent areas, 32 per cent from UP and 19 per cent from Bombay and West India, in addition to 8 per cent from the central zone (CP, central Indian states and Hyderabad state).[27]

It is clear that the largest single ethnic community among refugees in Sindh belonged to East Punjab. Indeed, Punjabis had been coming to Sindh from the 1890s onwards when canal irrigation started in vast areas and commercial agriculture flourished in the form of cultivation of cash crops. The completion of the Sukkar Barrage in 1932 led to a fresh influx of Punjabi peasant proprietors which elicited a hostile reaction from Sindhis.[28] After Independence, especially after the One-Unit was formed in 1955, the perceived 'Punjabisation' of Sindh was reflected through allotment of land to civil and military officers, a majority of whom were Punjabis, and recruitment to jobs along with establishment of industries.[29] In this way, an Urdu-speaking bureaucracy, Gujarati-speaking businessmen and Punjabi-speaking elite farmers and civil servants together occupied large parts of the social and economic space available in the province. It was not surprising that while refugees in Punjab had a good chance of assimilation, refugees in Sindh defied integration because of their perceived domination reflected through their linguistic, cultural and historical remoteness from the local population. In addition, these ethno-linguistic differences were patterned along sectoral lines. Mohajirs generally settled in cities while Sindhis overwhelmingly belonged to the rural sector. In Sindh 63.9 per cent of refugees lived in urban areas, 86.16 per cent in Hyderabad district and 71 per cent in Sukkar.[30] In Karachi, there were only 14.28 per cent speakers of Sindhi as opposed to 58.7 per cent who spoke Urdu as their mother tongue.[31] Migrants in Punjab settled in both rural and urban areas, but migrants in Sindh emerged as an urban community pitted against Sindhis who were overnight relegated to the position of a rural community. The fact that the sources of identity of migrants in Sindh in cultural, linguistic and even sectoral terms were different from those of Sindhis

was bound to reflect in the lack of integration between the two communities.

A crucial factor in the successful integration of migrants with locals in West Punjab was the relative balance of power between the two segments of the society. Migrants from East Punjab had an edge in education and jobs in selective fields over 'locals' who dominated electoral politics, commercial agriculture in the canal colonies as well as the army. This situation indirectly paved the way for assimilation because no real clash of interests developed along sectoral, class, professional or institutional lines involving a vast number of people in the society. While the host society in West Punjab had a somewhat credible power base of its own which enabled it to compete with refugees, its counterpart in Sindh was no match to Mohajirs. The 'ruling' dispensation in Punjab led by the Unionist party for two decades prior to Independence comprised Muslim Rajput landlords and Sufi *pirs* from West Punjab who were also politically ascendant in the Muslim League at the time of partition while East Punjab was typically represented by *biradris* of peasant proprietors.[32] The outgoing Hindu officers and professionals from West Punjab were replaced in many cases by their Muslim counterparts from East Punjab. As opposed to this pattern, the pre-partition exercise in political coalition building in Sindh presented an extreme case of faction-ridden politics.[33] Here the migrant elite represented the new state almost to the total exclusion of Sindhi leadership. It pushed the latter out of Karachi to Hyderabad and turned it into a pawn in the hands of the centre. Similarly, the most prosperous region of Punjab in terms of commercial agriculture lay in canal colonies and central districts on the Pakistan side. As opposed to this, Sindh lacked a progressive peasantry. As the Urdu- (and Gujarati-) speaking migrants, called Mohajirs, overnight dominated the political, administrative and cultural life of Sindh, especially in the capital cities of Karachi and Hyderabad, Sindhis looked upon them as land grabbers and imperialists. As opposed to this, refugees in Punjab were too integrated with the host community to project themselves as a distinct social, cultural or sectoral entity.

The in-migrants in Punjab were settled on agricultural land or urban property in the form of large communities. Official policy focused on preservation of group identity and familial bonds amidst the anarchic situation prevailing at that time. Refugees who came from East Punjab, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir were largely accommodated in West Punjab districts. Almost half of refugees from East Punjab, i.e., 2.6 million, were agriculturists out of which 2.25 million had already

been rehabilitated by July 1948.[34] The government tried to keep whole communities belonging to the same area of origin together in the process of rehabilitation.[35] It is interesting to look at the pattern of refugee rehabilitation across the border. The Government of India also believed that refugees from West Punjab should be ultimately settled in East Punjab and their migration to Delhi, UP and other areas should be discouraged. Only refugees from non-Punjab areas such as Sindh, NWFP and Baluchistan were likely to be settled in areas east of Punjab.[36] Following the policy of settlement of whole communities in specific places, refugees from canal colony districts of West Punjab were settled in their former areas from where they had initially migrated. Similarly, refugees from Lahore tehsil were settled in Ajnala tehsil, those from Sialkot in Gurdaspur, those from Rawalpindi division in parts of Ambala division, and Sikhs were settled in the riverine areas of Ferozepur, Fazilka and so on. On both sides of the border, the governments thought that rehabilitation should be on a communal basis. The idea was that individuals should be safeguarded from the devastating effects of break-down of support structures such as family, tribe and community.

The scene in Sindh presented a different model. First, unlike in West Punjab where the bulk of refugees came from East Punjab, in Sindh refugees came from all over India speaking different languages and representing different cultures. Second, they did not come en masse. Instead, their arrival was spread over a quarter of a century. Third, the political and administrative machinery handling refugees in Punjab was itself dominated by migrants from East Punjab and elsewhere in India. This tremendously facilitated the process of rehabilitation. As opposed to this, the Sindh government, which was Sindhi in character, had to deal with refugees who were non-Sindhi. Not surprisingly, the two sides were full of mistrust for each other. When the process of refugee rehabilitation started in Sindh, relations between refugees and Sindhis steadily grew tense. The process of their rehabilitation was very complex and traumatic because it involved settlement of migrants in an alien geographic, cultural and social milieu. Indeed, it forced many to go back to India. Karachi blamed the Sindh government for not doing enough for refugees and thus forcing them to return to their places of origin.[37]

A significant part of the rehabilitation process was the provision of jobs and shelter to refugees. In Punjab, claims to evacuee property were filed and disposed off in a relatively smooth way, especially as the governments of India and Pakistan cooperated with each other in

the matter of exchange of information about property, leading to allotment of 350,000 acres of evacuee land to incoming Muslim refugees within a short time.[38] The performance of the two provinces of Punjab and Sindh differed in the matter of disposal of property claims especially as the distinction of 'agreed' and 'non-agreed' areas cropped up for determining the legal status of evacuee property. The areas 'agreed' for disposal of evacuee property were essentially West and East Punjab on the two sides of the border. Following the agreement, revenue records of agricultural land were exchanged between the two governments, followed by verification of claims by a Central Record Office. Out of a total of 1,143,102 disposed claims, 95 per cent belonged to Punjab.[39] Refugees from 'agreed areas' were therefore allotted land on a provisional permanent basis. This pattern of handling claims to evacuee property led to the emergence of refugees as a more or less propertied class, especially in cities where they assumed a relatively middle-class status. Having passed through the bloodbath of migration which enhanced their sense of insecurity, Islamic identity and dependence on armed forces, these migrants generally behaved as a constituency for martial law governments, or as a lobby for right-wing parties in pursuit of anti-India and Pan-Islamic policies.[40] On the other hand, refugees in Sindh who hailed from 'non-agreed areas' were allotted land only on a temporary basis and on a smaller scale. This led to gross misgivings among Mohajirs of Sindh. The issue resurfaced 30 years later from the platform of the Mohajir ethnic party, the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) which projected it as one of the gross injustices done to Mohajirs in Sindh.[41] The process of refugee rehabilitation in Karachi and Sindh generally remained far from satisfactory. Even in 1954, seven years after partition, no less than 240,000 out of a total of 750,000 refugees in Karachi were still to be rehabilitated.[42] While in Punjab immigration had virtually stopped in 1948, in Sindh it continued even after the passport and visa system was introduced for travel between India and Pakistan.

Table 2

Patterns of Refugee Rehabilitation

	Punjab situation		*Sindh situation*
1	Settlement: smooth; quick (90% by July 1948)	1.	Settlement: problematic; delayed (30% not settled by 1954)
2	No returnees	2	Refugees returning to India
3	Refugees spread over Punjab	3	Refugees concentrated in Karachi
4	Permanent allotment	4	Temporary allotment

The trauma of migration in Punjab had involved sacrifices of life and property and therefore a relatively enhanced consciousness about national security. It meant that settlers generally deified the state and depended on religious sources of identity and inspiration, especially against the perceived bellicosity of India. In political terms, they tended to dislike what they considered selfish, corrupt and parochial politicians and acted as a support base for military intervention in politics. Alternatively, they preferred the presidential system over the parliamentary system as it symbolised unity of authority. Migrants' political attitudes carried extra weight because of their presence in large numbers in cities. For example, Lahore city was 43 per cent migrant, Multan 49 per cent, Gujranwala 50 per cent, Jhang 65 per cent and both Faisalabad and Sargodha 69 per cent.[43] The fact that migrants in Punjab were increasingly assimilated in the wider society made their influence non-distinct and relatively diffuse. Their attitudes were gradually identified with the whole of Punjab, not the least because of the locals' own fresh experience of bloody Hindu–Muslim riots. Also, northern Punjab was the traditional recruitment area for the army which had been deployed along the border area in Punjab for evacuation of Muslim refugees from India as well as along the cease-fire line in Kashmir where it fought with Indian forces alongside the Mujahideen. All this meant that there was no major difference in political attitudes of locals and migrants in Punjab. The pattern in Sindh was different. Here, Mohajir attitudes which were characterised by rampant anti-Indianism and commitment to centralisation of authority, were resented by Sindhis who took an opposite stand on such issues as provincial autonomy, political role of the army, Islamisation and foreign policy orientation especially towards India. In other words, assimilation in Punjab did not only mean that potential sources of conflict between locals and migrants were rendered ineffective, it actually led to consolidation of certain political attitudes which were widely diffused because of the absence of conflict between the two segments of the population.

Punjab: Pattern of Domination

We have observed that the partition of Punjab led to emergence of a wholly Muslim society in the western part. The bulk of East Punjabi refugees had been settled on land and in cities within a year. Their claims to property had been settled with the help of exchange of revenue records with India, although many were able to amass wealth on the

basis of fake claims supported by refugee elements in the bureaucracy. It has been observed that 75 per cent of urban immovable property in the Pakistan areas belonged to Hindus in pre-partition days.[44] A large beneficiary of this pattern of allotment of property was the relatively enterprising section of migrants from Jullundar, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Ambala, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and other cities of East Punjab which obtained urban property left by the relatively prosperous evacuee Hindu professional and commercial middle classes. In operational terms, they were able to start new businesses, expand the transactional network of commercial activity and install industry with the help of the development-oriented ruling elite of Pakistan.

Punjab emerged as the largest province of West Pakistan with a population larger than that of all the other provinces of that wing combined. As long as East Bengal was part of Pakistan, its overwhelming demographic weight at 55 per cent shaped the political attitudes of Punjab which accounted for a mere 38 per cent. These attitudes were characterised by commitment to One-Unit comprising the whole of West Pakistan—inter-wing parity thus denying the numerical advantage to East Pakistan—reliance on the Punjabi-dominated army for overt or covert operations in the civilian field and a focus on Islamic ideology as the principle of national integration largely at the expense of the principle of equitable distribution of wealth between provinces. After the emergence of Bangladesh, the logic of numbers favoured Punjab and electoral democracy no more threatened its preponderant representation in the elite structure. During the 1970s, a 'leftist' party—the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)—came to power, which soon became an irritant for the elite and was dismissed from office after the controversial 1977 elections. Later, Zia's martial law government indirectly caused deradicalisation of that party because it now had to adjust to the 'rightist' thinking of the military–bureaucratic establishment to continue to be a legitimate contender for power. Subsequent political developments in Pakistan led to the emergence of a de facto two-party model, because the Zia government had also put together most of the anti-Bhutto elements, especially from Punjab, in the form of a revived and refurbished Muslim League. Not surprisingly, Pakistan has experienced four general elections during the last 11 years, and the process of democratisation is well on its way despite acute problems of governance. Some writers place democracy's 'predicaments' in Pakistan, especially in the context of the PPP's decline, in the Bhutto legacy of 'open violation of Muslim religious sensibilities' and the resurgence of Islam

from the platform of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), with the Muslim League at its centre.[45] This, however, does not seem to be the case. The problems of governance in Pakistan relate essentially to the way restoration to democracy in 1985 was effected through an institutionalised form of patronage extended to local influence holders who had been elected in non-party elections. This eschewed the need for policy and accountability. Relative political instability in the form of successive dismissals of elected governments in 1988, 1990, 1993, and 1996 can be explained with reference to extreme polarisation between pro-Bhutto and pro-Zia elements with its epicentre in Punjab. This political division has provided the context for emergence of tensions as reflected through the bifocal nature of authority in the context of the dyarchical arrangement for division of constitutional powers on top between president and prime minister as per the 8th Amendment.[46]

West Punjab enjoys a pivotal position in post-Independence Pakistan. Some wonder if the country should be called Punjabistan.[47] As a self-conscious heartland of the country, it functions as the power base of Pakistan. Initially, patterns of migration and settlement of refugees in various Punjab districts had led to the emergence of various lines of conflict. For example, when Hindus and Sikhs migrated, their urban and rural property was selectively occupied by more 'enterprising' sections among neighbours. However, the government soon allotted evacuee property to incoming refugees from India. The local occupants of evacuee property who were thus forced to vacate it for the latter in many cases developed an antipathy towards them.[48] It was not uncommon to see local–Mohajir conflict in various localities. The large settler communities in Sargodha, Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), Multan, Jhang and Sialkot districts as well as Bahawalpur state evoked a negative reaction from the local population after the initial euphoria of helping calamity-ridden refugees was over. However, the two sides were internally too differentiated in tribal, caste and sectarian terms and externally too open-ended to operate as distinct communities, especially in the absence of separate sources of identity such as language, history and culture. The only area where linguistic differences could have triggered such a reaction was south-western Punjab. Here an incipient Siraiki movement emerged first as a move to make the erstwhile Bahawalpur state a province and then as a campaign to create a Siraiki province with its epicentre at Multan. Siraiki activists showed resentment against allotment of 600,000 acres of local land to non-Siraikis, neglect of Siraiki-speaking people in the quota system and hurdles in the way of growth of a Siraiki culture

through the print and electronic media.[49] However, the movement has not taken off despite the presence of half a dozen political parties and groups pursuing this agenda. Indeed, the local elite seeks to operate at the level of the whole of Punjab and does not want to limit itself to the 'poorer' regions of the province. Also, the status of Siraiki as a language separate from Punjabi as claimed by its protagonists remains controversial and both scholarly and political opinion consider it a Punjabi dialect.[50] Therefore, it can be safely maintained that there have been no serious internal challenges threatening the present make-up of the province.

Punjabis in Pakistan have generally developed a strong outward orientation in terms of identifying themselves with larger entities both present and past. For example, they have all along felt nostalgic about the Delhi-based Moghul imperium of the past, upheld the cause of Urdu and operated along concentric identities of Punjab, Pakistan and the Muslim world. Other communities of Pakistan, including the Sindhis, Baluchis and ironically, Mohajirs—who largely shared political attitudes of the Punjabis till the emergence of the MQM in 1984—have often challenged the pre-eminent position of Punjab and sought to carve out a political space for themselves through pressure, bargaining and occasionally armed struggle. Out of 1.48 million acres of land brought under irrigation by the Ghulam Mohammad Barrage, 0.87 million were allotted to serving and retired civil and military officers, a vast majority of whom belonged to Punjab.[51] Not surprisingly, Sindhi nationalists consider Punjabis as grabbers of vast agricultural lands along the river Indus and accuse them of expansionist designs. The MQM leadership also accused Punjab of pursuing plans to turn Karachi into its satellite.[52]

The language situation in Punjab has directly contributed to disaffection between the Punjabis and other ethnic communities of Pakistan. When the British annexed Punjab in 1849, Urdu not Punjabi was declared the language of administration and education in the province. Thus Urdu emerged as a language of literacy in Punjab, whereas Punjabi was never taught even at the primary level. Later, as the language of Muslim nationalism in British India in the twentieth century, Urdu served as a potent symbol of Indo-Muslim civilisation second only to Islam in political importance. At the same time, close proximity between Punjabi and the Sikh revivalist movement turned Muslims away from their ethnic and regional identity as Punjabis. The 'soft' boundaries between Urdu and Punjabi further helped blur the Punjabi identity.[53] Various Punjabi revivalist groups such as Dulla Bhatti Academy, Punjabi

Majlis and Khaddar Posh Trust continue to exert pressure in favour of restoring Punjabi to its rightful place.[54] However, with Urdu as the language of literacy in Punjab, an absolute majority of literate people in that province are cut off from the script of their language. This has converted Punjabis into linguistic agnostics. They are generally impervious to the language-based demands of other communities and consider linguistic identities as inherently centrifugal. The articulate sections of Punjabis tend to identify themselves with Urdu rather than Punjabi. They define Urdu-based Pakistani nationalism as the real legacy of the Two-Nation Theory and the source of their political identity. It is true that commitment to Urdu is more symbolic than real, as an absolute majority of Punjabis continue to express themselves in their mother tongue. However, the lack of perceived linguistic boundaries in the absence of written Punjabi has indirectly helped expand the Punjabi vision and ambitions beyond ethnic realities. The expanding world of Punjabis can be contrasted with the contracting world of Urdu-speaking Mohajirs. The latter previously operated in the circuit of professions and socio-cultural activity encompassing large areas of the non-Urdu-speaking population in Pakistan. However, they have been obliged to fall back on their linguistic identity as a security mechanism against the perceived dominance of the Punjabis in economic, political and cultural fields.

East Punjab represents the antithesis of all that West Punjab symbolises. It is marginal not central to the state of India, with a population not exceeding 2 per cent of the national total and territory reduced to one-fifth of what was once the mighty province of Punjab in British India, after the separation of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The obvious gain from the migration for the Akali movement was the concentration of the Sikh community in north-western districts of East Punjab which could provide it a demographic support base. However, the more the Akali Dal focused on the demand for a separate Punjabi province, the more Hindu communal organisations such as the Jana Singh and Hindu Mahasabha became hostile and the greater became the intercommunal divide.[55] Thus unlike the West Punjab scenario where communal divisions disappeared after the migration, East Punjab was given to bipolarity immersed in communal hostility. The two traditions of pro-centre Congressite politics and Sikh revivalist Akali Dal politics competed for influence. In the face of the former's domination over state politics for a quarter of a century the latter resorted to upholding the cause of state autonomy culminating in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution in 1972. What

followed was a further sharpening of the divide between the two communities.[56] It has been suggested that the green revolution led to economic competition between the two communities and alienated the educated unemployed among Sikh youth who formed the All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF).[57] One is reminded of the All Pakistan Mohajir Students Organisation (APMSO) which drew upon alienated Mohajir youth of Karachi for its support and which similarly embraced political violence as a strategy in pursuit of nationalist goals. The East Punjab situation deteriorated from the early 1980s, punctuated by Operation Bluestar, the assassination of Indira Gandhi followed by anti-Sikh riots and a series of repressive counter-insurgency measures. There is more to the nationalist movement of Sikhs in the 1980s and 1990s than what is described as the failure of democratic governance which could have channelled the potential volatility of participant groups into constructive behaviour.[58] The Sikh movement failed to delegitimise the federal government in Delhi which crushed it in a low-intensity war, although at the cost of the militarisation of Punjab.[59] From East Punjab's perspective, India represents an ethnic democracy because it upholds 'a form of pan-Indian ethnicity' represented by Hinduism.[60] Nostalgia for Lahore-based Sikh rule in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries generally characterises East Punjab's assertion of identity which is incommensurate with prevalent political and ideological realities of India as well as demographic and sectoral realities of East Punjab. As opposed to the linguistic agnosticism of West Punjab, it is Punjabi-based linguistic nationalism which represents the Sikhs' political vision and aspirations. Sikhs of East Punjab tend to operate in multiple identities—Sikh, Punjabi, Indian—which are often conflicting and even at best of times hardly as harmoniously integrated as in West Punjab. East Punjab is essentially committed to less control or no control of the central government as opposed to the unitarian tendency of strident West Punjabi political opinion.

Table 3

Punjab: East and West

West Punjab	*East Punjab*
Heartland	Rimland
Unity of community	Bipolarity
Linguistic agnosticism	Linguistic nationalism
Concentric identities	Conflicting identities
Centralist/Unitarian	Provincialist/Separatist

It is interesting to see how certain communities in India and Pakistan reversed their ethnic profiles after cross-migration at the time of the

partition. West Punjab continues to be the least ethnically conscious province of Pakistan, whereas a fierce ethnic movement has been launched in East-Punjab in India during the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, ethnic consciousness is least developed in UP in India, whereas Mohajirs, a majority of whom belong to UP, have developed a militant ethnic movement in Pakistan. We can argue that a community defines its ethnic profile in terms of its positioning vis-à-vis the state as well as such vital sources of identity and legitimacy as language, geography and demography. Identification with a perceived all-Pakistan lingua franca, Urdu, has cut across ethnic boundaries in West Punjab. Similarly, Hindi in India does not serve the nationalist purposes of its home state UP and has a constituency effectively spread over the Hindi belt and somewhat thinly spread over the rest of India. In geographical terms, UP in India and Punjab in Pakistan have a self-image of being the heartland of India and Pakistan respectively, while Sikhs in East Punjab and Mohajirs in Sindh feel that they have been pushed to the periphery.

We have observed that the primordialist logic about the relatively permanent sources of ethnic movements does not hold ground in the face of rapidly changing political attitudes of communities. On the other hand, circumstantial or instrumentalist logic tends to concentrate on voluntarist aspects, especially in terms of policies of the ruling elite. It is argued that the larger phenomena such as the Hindu–Muslim dichotomy impinge on more specific and local conflicts where they bring about changes along potential lines of division within and between communities. The shape of politics in a community is finally determined by its location in the changing matrix of power in social, economic, cultural and administrative fields of public activity.

Notes

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2. *The Pakistan Times*, 19 August 1947.
3. For a discussion of the controversial nature of the Radcliffe Award, see Alastair Lamb, *Birth of a Tragedy* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 37–40.
4. See, for example, Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 125–30; and Mushtaqur Rehman, *Divided Kashmir* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 57–60.

5. Hasan Askari Rizvi, *Military and Politics in Pakistan* (Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1986), 39.
6. Rehman, *Divided Kashmir*, 56.
7. NDC, *Partition of the Punjab*, vol. 3, 230.
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9. Gurharpal Singh, *Communism in Punjab* (Delhi: Ajanta, 1994), 90–91.
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12. Swarna Aiyar, 'August Anarchy: The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947', *South Asia*, special issue, 18 (1995), 23–24.
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15. Sir E. Jenkins to Lord Wavell, 17 March 1947, OIOC Cat. No. R/3/1/176; NDC, *Disturbances in the Punjab 1947* (Islamabad, 1995) (hereafter *DIP*), 100.
16. Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the week ending 22 March 1947, NDC Accession No. S 415, *DIP*, 107.
17. Punjab Police Abstract of Intelligence for the week ending 29 March, 1947, NDC Accession No. S 415, *DIP*, 113.
18. S. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947* (New Delhi: Voice of India, reprint 1991), 20.
19. Ian Talbot and D.S. Tatla (eds), *Punjab* (World Bibliographical Series, Oxford: Clio Press, 1992), xxi.
20. Note by E. Jenkins, 9 April 1947, OIOC Cat. No. R/3/1/176, NDC MFU Accession No. 34, *DIP*, 136.
21. Message from Prime Minister of Pakistan to Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, dated September 10th, 1947; FO 371/65574.
22. Sir Jenkins to Lord Wavell, *DIP*, 101.
23. Gyanesh Kudaisya, 'Demographic Upheaval of Partition: Refugees and Agricultural Resettlement in India 1947–67', *South Asia*, special issue (1995), 86.
24. *Census of Pakistan 1951*, Karachi, vol. 1, Table 19–A; vol. 6, 65.
25. Ibid., vol. 1, 30.
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Reflections on Partition: Pakistan Perspective

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This article examines four theoretical issues arising from partition and its legacy for contemporary Pakistan. The first is the persistence of identity politics and how notions of community are being constantly constructed. The second is the exclusive hegemonic discourse that continues from the pre- Independence era to the post-colonial period. The third is the issue of decentralisation of power and its impact on ethnic mobilisation. Finally, the article considers the issue of majority versus minority rights and argues that the danger of creating local hegemonic discourses in the devolution of power could be avoided by vesting cultural rights in the individual as human rights, thereby accommodating difference and diversity without going down the road of communalism.

Introduction

Partition as a concept has re-emerged with the dawning of the millennium. There is a need to reflect upon and consider whether partition is a long-term resolution to ethnic conflict. The question which needs to be addressed is whether partition simply responds to short-term difficulties and fails to tackle or address long-term issues. The significance of this question is increasing as a global resurgence of ethnic conflicts spiralling into separatist movements, ethnic cleansing, genocide and intractable violence becomes more common. Dramatically the former states of Yugoslavia and the USSR broke up into smaller units and violence continues in Rwanda and Burundi.[1] Partition, however, becomes like a contested and bitter divorce where former partners fight over property, people and even memories of the past and has a lasting negative effect on their progeny. The South Asian experience does throw some light on

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the long-term trajectories and impact of partition. The subcontinent was partitioned nearly 50 years ago and that certainly does give us a historical period to reflect upon its ramifications. Has Pakistan resolved the burning issues of pre-Independence Indian Muslims? Certainly Pakistan's history suggests that it has not been a panacea for the problems and difficulties of its people. Its history of five decades is littered with bloody examples of ethnic and separatist conflicts. From Bangladesh to Mohajirstan the call of separatism, successful in the former case and judgement held in abeyance but probably unsuccessful in the latter case, has not been quenched by the division of India in 1947.

This article does not seek to rake over the embers of India's partition. There does not seem to be any benefit in repeating old and worn-out arguments apportioning blame and responsibility for the communal frenzy that led to the division. There is, however, a need to consider and examine the theoretical issues arising from partition and its legacy for contemporary Pakistan. Four theoretical issues which straddle the divide and continue to play a vexing and almost intractable role need to be examined. The first is the persistence of identity politics and specifically how notions of community are being constantly constructed. While the understanding of what is a community is shifting throughout the historical period the specific people involved are the same. Prior to 1947 Muslims from minority Muslim provinces mobilised around symbols of religion; today Mohajirs are mobilising around ethnicity. What they are asserting is different aspects of their identification at different historical junctures. Theoretically this requires concepts of identity that are flexible, malleable, contingent and contextual which can accommodate multifarious manifestations including nationalism and ethnicity. After all it is mobilisation around notions of community that underpins arguments for partition and separation in the colonial and post-colonial periods. The second point considers Gramsci's notion of hegemony.[2] Exclusive hegemonic discourse is a theoretical constant that runs through from the pre-Independence era into contemporary Pakistan. Of course its specificity, location and focus shift with the emergence of Pakistan but its inability to accommodate difference remains a primary issue. Its exclusive nature significantly provides sustenance and justification for the type of identity politics that has become so prolific and intractable in Pakistan. Next is the question of decentralisation of power and the major impact it is considered to have upon ethnic mobilisation. Decentralisation is treated as a panacea for ethnic conflict as it allows for accommodation of difference in the locale. This is another debate

which straddles partition as the demand underpins the politics of community and for the recognition of difference. While there is significant substance to this point of view it would seem to be simplistic to consider decentralisation on its own to be adequate to resolve ethnic tensions. The final point which I want to raise, the conundrum of majority versus minority rights, is another constant theme that crosses the great divide. Whether it is the rights of Muslims in colonial India or the rights of Mohajirs in Karachi, the problem continues and I want to explore this issue by interrogating the concepts of social and cultural pluralism, looking at how forms of pluralism exacerbate issues relating to minorities.

Identity Politics

Ranger argues that identity is contingent, contextual and not fixed in time or space.[3] He posits a dynamic notion of identity which is plastic and imagined and re-imagined. There is a complex interaction both internal and external in the construction of identity in which structure, agency and cultural resources play an important part. This approach to social identity allows for a conceptual framework that incorporates different manifestations whether they be nationalism, ethnicity, religious identification or new ethnicity. Imagined identification as a concept is important in understanding the subjective dynamics among demotic groups that are prepared to cross the Rubicon in order to establish discrete notions of community. The significance of this perspective lies in the fact that it explains the behaviour of non-elite participants in identity politics. Rational choice[4] perspectives focus on the instrumentality of elites in how they select icons and idioms and metaphors used for mobilisation. Quite often conflicts based on identity have transcendental repercussions that cannot be considered rational. In this sense imagining and re-imagining processes of identity politics attempt to address the subjective dimensions which are important in the incorporation of demotic groups in the construction of community. Of course how they are incorporated is subject to internal debate and negotiation, which affects the trajectory of the imagining process that any particular community initiates.

> One cannot a priori determine whether any particular ethnicity is progressive or reactionary in effect; there is a constant struggle between different imaginers of ethnic identity; between young and old, men and women, radicals and conservatives, exclusive and inclusive

definitions of identity. In this struggle space is sometimes levered open and sometimes foreclosed. Ethnicity is not moral in itself but it constitutes the ground on which fundamental moral debate takes place.[5]

Ranger's framework also accommodates Hall's argument of new ethnicity which enlarges the debate about identification to include class, gender and generation. Pertinently, Hall posits the notion of identification rather than identity. 'We know that identities in contemporary society are more flexible, more open, more labile, more fluid, less predictable, more dramaturgical, more dependent on performance less dependent on—as it were—inherited tradition'.[6] New formations of identity politics are emerging which do not fit into classical anthropological notions of ethnicity based on culture. Anthropologists have argued that ethnicity is based on kinship groups, family and culture in its widest sense which incorporates religion, language, etc. There are new formations of identity politics that do not fit into this criteria, such as the emergence of black and gender politics. As Benson has argued in the case of Afro-Caribbeans, since they do not demonstrate classical notions of family, language and kinship groupings anthropological analysis of them becomes a sum of negatives and, therefore, they are denied having culture and identity.[7] Clearly though in the arena of politics, there is a black identity, a contested and contingent identification which persistently and intermittently asserts itself. In Pakistan, there are two examples of new ethnicity which do not fit the classical understanding of ethnic identity. The emergence of Kashmiri identity among Mirpuris and Mohajir ethnicity are two examples of this process and I will focus on the latter as Kashmiri identity will take the discussion away from being exclusively on Pakistan.[8]

Three different types of identity politics can be discerned—religious nationalism, linguistic politics and new ethnicities which were active among Muslims—that eventually became incorporated in Pakistan. Pakistani nationalism was a good example of identity politics mobilised around cultural markers and idioms of religion. This became a counter-hegemonic discourse against Indian nationalism, which established its significance in the mid-1940s. It was, however, a contested identification and in the Muslim majority provinces of Bengal, Punjab and Sindh, strong regional interests juxtaposed with Muslim nationalism. In Sindh and the North-West Frontier Province there were also strong ethnic movements that were in opposition to Pakistani nationalism. Furthermore, within the Muslim League high command there were many contested

opinions about the nature of Pakistan. The acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan by Jinnah and the Muslim League Working Committee was indicative of the fact that separatism was not inevitable.[9] However, the conflation of exigent circumstances, i.e., breakdown of constitutional negotiations, the civil disobedience movement launched by the League and the accelerated British timetable for departure, acted to create conditions for communal fury that engulfed northern India. It is in this context that opposition among Muslims to Jinnah's project of religious nationalism collapsed. Consequently, the failure of India to emerge as a single independent nation was rooted in the inability to accommodate the politics of difference.[10]

In Pakistan, Muslim nationalism became the official ideology; the country was depicted as one united nation bonded by Islam and the Urdu language. This official nationalism was limited to the military–bureaucratic elite which rejected any notions of cultural difference. It was in this context that linguistic politics emerged as a counter-hegemonic discourse. A re-imagining of identification by those previously aligned with Pakistani nationalism took place. Where previously ethnic and religious identifications converged, now those groups that were not represented in the military–bureaucratic elite asserted distinctive identifications articulated through language. Linguistic movements articulated, at various times, identity politics around Bengali, Baluchi, Sindhi, Pashto and Siraiki languages. Linguistic politics became the vehicle for counter-hegemonic aspirations and resulted in confrontations with the state. In the case of East Pakistan, inept and brutal handling of the situation by the military junta resulted in the emergence of an independent Bangladesh. No less traumatic, however, was the suppression of the movement for Greater Baluchistan, Sindhu Desh and Pakhtunistan.[11]

As identifications are contested and contingent, it is not surprising that none of these groups were linguistically homogeneous. In the pre-colonial era, ruling *ashraf* elites, irrespective of whether they were Bengali, Sindhi, Baluchi or Pakhtun primarily used Persian as the official court language. Language as a symbol of identity was closely associated with modernity and, in this particular context, that meant British rule. The shift to vernacular languages was resisted and occurred at an uneven pace. The tendency was for demotic groups in these areas to use vernacular languages while the elite gradually moved to speaking either Urdu or English. In colonial Bengal, the ashraf's usage of Persian was replaced by Urdu while *ajlaf* demotic groups spoke Bengali. This dichotomy persisted even when the language movement was active in

the 1950s in East Pakistan. In the case of Sindh, at the time of Independence the language spoken by the elite was English and the vernacular was the language of the people; in the case of the NWFP the National Awami Party, which was the champion of the Pashto, made Urdu the provincial language when it came to power in the 1970s;[12] and in Baluchistan the Baluchi language was deeply riven with differences of dialect.

The third form of identity politics which has recently emerged is new ethnicity. Mobilisation around Mohajirs is not based on language or notions of culture that are recognised by anthropologists to be the basis of ethnicity. The term Mohajir literally means refugee and was applied to all those who migrated from India. However, its usage has undergone transformation and it first excluded those who migrated from East Punjab to West Punjab and referred to only Urdu-speaking migrants. Today Mohajir, as deployed by the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM),[13] includes Urdu and Gujarati speakers. It covers those who migrated from the United Provinces, Bihar and Hyderabad Deccan who are Urdu speakers, and Gujarati-speaking Memons, Bohras and Khojas. There are at least two distinct linguistic strands and a myriad of regional identifications as well as religious affiliations which are being re-imagined as Mohajir identity. Urdu speakers are the dominant element in Mohajir ethnicity; they are bounded along with others in a common position vis-à-vis Sindhis, Pakhtuns, Punjabis and Baluchis. It is on this basis that among the many demands posited by the MQM, is one calling for a separate province, and some Mohajirs who are more extreme are demanding the separate state of Mohajirstan.[14] Again we see that identity politics in its latest manifestation is pushing in a separatist direction challenging state boundaries. Without being premature in making a judgement, it would seem that the chances of a separate independent Mohajir state are extremely slim.

Identification in the arena of politics is being continuously imagined and re-imagined and is mobilising demotic groups and challenging the state. In two instances it has resulted in the emergence of full-blown nationalism and the emergence of independent states. The movement for Pakistan and Bangladesh's struggle for independence were initiated originally as identity politics. In the case of Baluchistan, the NWFP and Sindh, the trajectory of identity politics was retarded and brutally suppressed by the state. Given this, why is it that politics among Muslims who came to be in Pakistan continues to move in a separatist direction?

Exclusive Hegemonic Discourse

Gramsci's concept of hegemony is used in relationship of state and civil society to explain how dominant classes maintain control through ideological processes. In colonial India, British rule was challenged by a counter-hegemonic discourse represented by nationalism that was primarily located in civil society. However, the Congress' hegemonic position was challenged by another discourse articulated by religious nationalism. The focus in the post-colonial period shifted from civil society to the state. The location of this discourse shifted as religious nationalism became the dominant discourse in Pakistan. What is important to emphasise is that within Indian nationalism, the discourse was exclusive and was not prepared to accommodate religious difference. The consequence was that the processes of exclusion reinforced and intensified the focus on identity politics articulated by the Muslim League.[15]

Muslims' initial response to the formation of the Indian National Congress was fear that majoritarian pluralism combined with democracy would result in the dominance of Hindus. Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Amir Ali argued that western notions of elected representatives exemplified by Rippon's Reforms of the 1880s were not appropriate to a society differentiated by 'race and religion and caste and creed'. Muslims were threatened by a socially upwardly mobile Hindu middle-class majority which was becoming politically assertive. To counteract this development, Sayyid Ahmad Khan posited the notion of separate electorates and weightages.[16] These features became the touchstone of Muslim politics and formed the basis of the Communal Award of 1932 which was announced at the Second Round Table Conference. Most Muslims were not prepared to surrender these checks and balances without significant compensation.[17]

On the other hand, Congress' position concerning Muslims was not so accommodating. The Nehru Report of 1928 proposed a strong unitary structure and recommended the replacement of separate electorates and weightages with joint electorates and reserved seats. These were the maximum concessions possible to Muslims which would keep Hindu communalists on board. As Congress' position hardened after its success in the 1937 elections, the party's ability and willingness to accommodate the Muslim League decreased. Following Jinnah's adoption of the Two-Nation Theory, Gandhi attempted to bring Muslims back into the fold, but his efforts were rebuffed primarily because he had nothing to offer

but good faith. Nehru, whose star was in ascendancy, remained less sympathetic to the Hindu–Muslim question because of his radical and socialist convictions. He felt that religious difference would be displaced by common bonds of ecumenic unity. Nehru saw the Hindu–Muslim issue as secondary to independence and hence refused to give it centrality. 'I am afraid I cannot get excited over the communal issue, important as it is temporarily. It's after all a side issue, and it can have no real importance in the larger scheme of things'.[18] Clearly Nehru was dismayed when he was released from prison in 1945 to find this 'side issue' occupying centrestage. However, partition was not inevitable, as seen by Jinnah's acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan on the basis of parity and a weak federal centre. Failure to reach an agreement led to India being partitioned in order to separate the warring groups.[19]

In Pakistan the post-colonial state began to construct another exclusive hegemonic discourse. By the early 1950s, it became clear that a Punjabi–Mohajir axis was emerging. This group which had resisted centralisation by the Congress now championed centralisation of power in Pakistan. Its influence was great because of its pre-eminence in the bureaucracy and military. In contrast, Bengali political leadership was more interested in a decentralised state structure, even to the extent of decreasing tensions with India and thus obviating the need for a larger military. Its attempts to tighten its grip on the centre through political means were resisted by the emerging military–bureaucratic oligarchy. Later, under Ayub Khan's regime in the 1960s, the resistance went underground. The Awami League[20] resurfaced with vigour in the upsurge for democracy a decade later. Its central demands, of decentralisation, greater representation in the army and respect for majority decision in the National Assembly, would have reformulated the hegemonic discourse if they had succeeded.

With the break-up of Pakistan and the emergence of an independent Bangladesh, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto emerged as the new leader of Pakistan. In this period, he accommodated some demands from his native province of Sindh and diffused tension there. In contrast, however, he dealt harshly with emerging opposition in the Frontier and Baluchistan. The crack down on the opposition alienated Pakhtuns and Baluchis. This resulted in full-scale rebellion in Baluchistan from 1973. However, with his removal from power and execution in 1977 by General Zia, the hegemonic discourse in Pakistan was reformulated. Zia, due to Pakistan's involvement in fighting against the Russian-backed regime in Afghanistan, incorporated Pakhtuns into the highest level of the ruling hierarchy. For similar reasons he placated the opposition in Baluchistan. But this

was done at a price. In Sindh, he was confronted by a major rebellion in 1983 and again in 1986. Sindhi participation in the central government decreased with the fall of Bhutto and in the province the perception developed that it was a colony of the Punjab. As a result various strands of ethnic assertion emerged making demands from outright independence to greater autonomy.

In urban Sindh, Mohajirs' alienation too was increasing since Bhutto's time. He had imposed a quota limit on the number of Mohajirs in the Federal Civil Service and in the various departments that came under its purview. Bhutto's policy of lateral entry which resulted in mainly Sindhis and PPP supporters being introduced into senior positions was also damaging to Mohajir interests. The nationalisation of industry undertaken by him adversely affected business interests which were predominantly owned by Mohajirs. Under Zia (1977–88) most of these policies remained unchanged and a new Punjabi–Pakhtun alliance emerged which replaced the Punjabi–Mohajir alliance that had emerged with the founding of Pakistan. Pakhtun and Punjabi influences in business, in the higher echelons of the federal government and Karachi administration increased at the expense of Mohajirs. The shift in the hegemonic discourse in Pakistan now excluded Mohajirs.[21]

The hegemonic discourse thus went through various manifestations. It excluded, or was perceived to exclude, certain groups and was never truly universal in character. This lack of universality is an issue that spans partition. The Congress was never able to accommodate Muslim demands in the 1940s and this was partly due to the right wing of the party and to Nehru's world-view which did not recognise religious difference to be significant. In the case of Pakistan, Punjabis were the dominant partners in the military–bureaucratic oligarchy. Incorporation of one group was at the expense of another and in the latest manifestation of this hegemonic discourse, Pakhtuns were included resulting in the alienation of Mohajirs. It is the exclusive characteristic of the hegemonic discourse that becomes one of the structural parameters which directs opposition by excluded groups along the road of identity politics.

Decentralisation of Power

Several academics have pointed out that the issue of accommodating cultural diversity is associated with the decentralisation of power. Rizvi has pointed out that the federalist rationale for larger states has been turned on its head. In the case of the United States, the diversity of

regions and people necessitated the decentralisation of power to curb the central government from becoming too powerful. This logic in post-colonial states and, in particular, in South Asia has been inverted and it is argued that strong federal governments are necessary to corral and homogenise diverse pluralities into the nation. 'Denial of autonomy to the regional and particularist groups is often a ploy for "internal imperialism" '.[22] Rizvi indicates that the key to India's relative success in accommodating diversity and heterogeneity has been accommodation. Jalal reiterates this point, arguing that India's formal democracy combined with formation of linguistic states, 'regional political economies and electoral processes' has allowed for a greater resilience to central interference. The margins for centre–region negotiations are much greater in the case of India but the greater degree of centralisation found in Pakistan leaves far less room for manoeuvre. The options are difficult choices 'of co-operation on the centre's terms or costly anti-state defiance'.[23]

I have argued elsewhere that the issue of decentralisation is a historical continuity that spans partition.[24] A common characteristic of identity politics, implicitly or explicitly, was the demand for decentralisation of power. The Muslim League was prepared to remain in a weak federation as elaborated in the Cabinet Mission Plan, the Awami League's demands in the 1970s had similar implications and Pakhtuns and Baluchis were only pushed down the road of rebellion when the federal characteristics of the constitution were trampled upon by Bhutto's political intervention. In Sindh, Bhutto's downfall alienated Sindhis and pushed them into making demands for an independent Sindh or for a confederation, or greater autonomy. In urban Sindh, the call for Mohajirstan either as an independent state or as a separate province underlines the Mohajirs' desire for greater decentralisation of power from a centre which has alienated them.

Clearly, decentralisation of power is an important factor in accommodating diversity. In reality, however, decentralisation is not a simple panacea. The first point that needs to be elaborated is the tacit assumption that democratic processes are prevalent. A stratagem of non-democratic regimes from the colonial period to contemporary Pakistan was to allow for decentralisation of power on the local level, while retaining control at the centre. In the colonial period, the Reforms of 1919 and the 1935 India Act were based on the calculation that by allowing for decentralisation of power at the provincial level, the authorities would win over support from the nationalist movement. Holding on tight at the centre

and allowing flexibility at the provincial level would derail the nationalist projects. This strategy was also employed by the military regime of Ayub Khan with the introduction of Basic Democracy which, it was hoped, would take the punch out of the opposition's demand for parliamentary elections. The trade off was that by allowing some form of democratic processes on the local level, opposition to the regime would be deflated. In both the pre- and post-colonial examples the stratagem failed. The people were not prepared to be bribed by limited democratic processes while being denied a sovereign parliament. The irony is that with a democratically elected government at the centre headed by Benazir Bhutto there is reluctance to hold local body elections. The government interest is in managing elections that would ensure a Pakistan People's Party (PPP) victory. In the case of Karachi, the central government's nominees are busy gerrymandering a constituency boundary in order to create a PPP majority.[25] The same reluctance to decentralise has also been found in India, where state governments are realising that empowerment of *panchayats* is undermining their authority.[26]

The second issue which needs to be considered when reflecting upon decentralisation of power is that it can create local hegemonic discourses. In the movements for independent Bangladesh, Greater Baluchistan, Pakhtunistan, Sindhu Desh and Mohajirstan, the assumption has been that they are reflecting homogeneous entities. Bangladesh, however, has difficulties in accommodating diversity represented by Biharis, Hindus and tribals in the Chittagong Hill tracts. Baluchistan has a substantial population of Pakhtun, Brauhi, Makrani and Lassi minorities and the NWFP possesses a substantial Hindko-speaking population. Again in Karachi we find a heterogeneous population. While Mohajirs are the largest group in the city, it has the largest urban concentration of Pakhtuns and Baluchis in the country, and there is also a substantial Punjabi population as well as a significant Sindhi minority.

Decentralisation to the local level with respect to Karachi would create a local hegemonic discourse which would exclude non-mohajirs. The principle of majoritarian pluralism would result in a simple majority allowing the MQM to run the city but would disenfranchise significant elements of the population. Thus decentralisation while benefiting the dominant group would be clearly disadvantageous to minorities. The argument for decentralisation is that it allows for diversity and difference to be accommodated at the local level. However, the local level itself in many cases is quite heterogeneous and while Mohajirs would gain, minorities are in turn produced and disenfranchised in the process. Such

an outcome is inconsistent with the argument of trying to acknowledge and accommodate cultural diversity and difference. The situation in Karachi is symptomatic of many regions in Pakistan in that there is great cultural diversity and difference but no mechanism for its recognition.

In sum, decentralisation of power in a non-democratic framework is no solution. Within a functioning democracy, further decentralisation is essential to accommodate and create the necessary space for cultural diversity. Ironically decentralisation to local levels can, if the principle of first-past-the-post is adhered to, create local hegemonic discourses which are equally exclusive and disenfranchise various local minorities. This is not an argument for denying the need for decentralisation of power, it is to suggest that further mechanisms are necessary before cultural diversity and difference are accommodated.

Cultural Pluralism

To understand how cultural diversity and difference can be incorporated there is a need to reflect upon notions of cultural pluralism and what they entail. The concept of social and cultural pluralism was formulated by F.S. Furnival with reference to the ethnic segmentation of colonial Indonesia.[27] The concept was later further examined by M.S. Smith who developed the argument that there are three variations of pluralism: cultural, structural and social.[28] He argued that structural pluralism was marked by institutional segmentation of cultural and social diversity in society. The differential incorporation of cultural sections was articulated through formal exclusionary policies as epitomised by the ex-apartheid regime of South Africa, or could be informally instituted through substantial sectional inequalities such as the case of Afro-Americans in pre-civil rights America. Social pluralism, he argued, is the institutional differentiation of society, coinciding with a sharp demarcation of society into exclusive segments. This form of pluralism was evident in consociational democracies of Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands where incorporation of a number of groupings in various spheres including the political realm was based on equivalence. Cultural pluralism consists of variable institutional diversity without corresponding collective segmentation.[29] In Britain and the United States, social differentiation was restricted to the private domain and had no structural implications for the public sphere. Clearly there are difficulties in trying to use notions of cultural pluralism in the manner that has been elaborated

by Smith because they are not necessarily premised on the assumption of equality. Arguments that introduce equality in association with cultural diversity lead the discussion into multiculturalism. Charles Taylor argues for a normative conception of multiculturalism which is about 'stipulating the procedural and substantive principles ordering a multicultural society'. Identity politics is shaped by the recognition, absence, or misrecognition of multiculturalism. Absence of recognition or misrecognition fuels oppression and harm and thus sets the stage for identity politics to redress the position.[30]

The ways in which cultural diversity has been recognised institutionally in colonial India and Pakistan have been multifarious. There is evidence for structural pluralism, social and cultural pluralism and also some examples of multicultural practice. In response to Sayyid Ahmad Khan's fears that majoritarian pluralism would lead to Muslims being excluded, colonial authorities introduced separate electorates and weightages from 1906 onwards as a mechanism to politically incorporate Muslims. Later these features were to become central characteristics of the 1932 Communal Award which paved the way for the 1935 Government of India Act. By giving institutional recognition to religious diversity within the electoral system, it produced a form of consociational democracy[31] on the provincial level. Muslims did not have to appeal to a wider audience to be elected, they could institute positive discrimination in terms of employment and education. In some instances, for example, Punjab, it forced cooperation between different religious groups in order to exploit the political advantages of decentralisation of power.[32]

Recognition of cultural diversity through separate electorates and weightages formed the foundation on which the 1946 Cabinet Mission Plan was based. Within a loose federal framework, there was parity between the Muslim League and Congress, combined with majoritarian pluralism. This amalgam of majoritarian pluralism and consociationalism could be considered to be an inchoate form of multiculturalism. It recognised difference on the basis of equality and simultaneously operated on the first-past-the-post principle.

With the establishment of Pakistan, the return to majoritarian pluralism possessed serious implications for the hegemony of the military–bureaucratic oligarchy. The implementation of One-Unit which was the centrepiece of the 1956 constitution and Ayub's 1962 constitution reintroduced the notion of equality between Bengal and West Pakistan. Normally such devices are used to give institutional access to disadvantaged groups. In this case it was designed to prevent Bengalis, who

were numerically superior in political representation but were socially disadvantaged, from making major inroads in the state structure. This form of consociationalism became redundant when Bangladesh became independent. In post-1971 Pakistan there was a return to majoritarian pluralism and there was also some evidence of structural pluralism and slight evidence of multiculturalism. The quota system Bhutto introduced to limit the numbers of Mohajirs in the federal service was an example of positive discrimination towards Sindhis and introduction of reserved seats for women was another example. There is also evidence of structural pluralism in the way that non-Muslims are formally excluded by the constitution from high office.

What becomes evident is that recognition of diversity by the state is not necessarily a process of giving access to disadvantaged groups. In certain circumstances the state's recognition is used to maintain hegemonic positions. Mohajir demands, for instance, go back to a combination of colour-blind and structural segregationist approaches. The MQM's Charter of Resolutions, the party's founding document, had the following nine points:

1. Only 'real' Sindhis (Mohajirs and Sindhis) would have the right to vote in Sindh.
2. Business licenses and permits should not be given to those who do not have the franchise to vote.
3. 'Stranded Pakistanis' (Pakistanis living in Bangladesh—Biharis) should be allowed to settle and become citizens of Pakistan.
4. Afghans should be restricted to their official refugee camps in the NWFP and Baluchistan and not be allowed to buy property or reside in Sindh.
5. Local bus services should be taken over by the Karachi Municipal Corporation, and bus drivers must be literate before being given driver's licenses (directed against the Pathan domination of mass transportation).
6. Non-Sindhis and non-Mohajirs should not be allowed to buy property in Sindh.
7. A fresh census should be held in Sindh Province and the Mohajir share of the federal quota should be revised upward to reflect the true population of the Mohajirs.
8. The basis for Sindhi domicile for purposes of the federal quota should be 20 years' continuous residence in the province.
9. Police officers implicated in atrocities against Mohajirs should be

tried before special tribunals. (Most such officers were Punjabis.)[33]

To these original demands, the idea was introduced that Mohajirs should be considered a fifth nationality in Pakistan. Most of these demands were incorporated into the accord that the MQM entered with the PPP in December 1988. When these demands are examined from the perspective of cultural pluralism what we find is that most of them are designed to institute forms of structural pluralism—the institutional recognition that if afforded would effectively exclude competition from other groups and preserve their dominant position or enhance it. Mohajir policy is to create institutional barriers to limit competition from other minorities and simultaneously to increase their representation in those areas where they are dominant. So on the one hand they are asking for an increase in the quota for recruitment into the federal service and this was precisely designed to increase the share of under-represented Sindhis. On the other hand, in areas where Mohajirs face competition from Punjabis and Pakhtuns in business and in the transport industry, they want restrictions that would effectively give them a free rein. Moreover, demanding the disenfranchisement of immigrants from up-country and increasing their numbers with the repatriation of Biharis would further consolidate their political hold over Karachi.

Lijphart advocated that the solution lay in the advance of a federal consociational democracy combined with proportional representation, where there would be a coalition on the elite level representing the various ethnic groupings. This recognition of difference would be reinforced by an ethnic veto in the legislative assembly. There would be proportional representation and that would allow ethnic minorities to be proportionately represented in state institutions. This segmental autonomy would be located in a loose federal system. When we consider this proposition in relation to the demands made by Mohajirs we find that the problem is that Mohajirs are not asking for proportional representation in state institutions but arguing that their dominance should persist. Of course proportional representation would also mean that Punjabis would maintain their dominant position by virtue of their numbers. Another difficulty is that this whole argument is based on the assumption of an elite contract but the demands of the MQM indicate that it would be difficult to reach such an agreement. The 1988 MQM–PPP pact was, for example, short-lived. The two main areas of contention were the unwillingness to repatriate Biharis from Bangladesh, and the dis-

solution of all placement bureaus designed to recruit candidates to the civil service. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto continued to use placement bureaus to recruit candidates who were mainly Sindhi and were all members of the PPP directly into the civil service.[34] The repatriation of Biharis was cancelled primarily due to opposition by Sindhis. The political reality is such that Sindhis along with Baluchis are an under-represented minority in government institutions. The former are also the home constituency of the Prime Minister which she cannot afford to alienate.

These problems are seemingly intractable because cultural diversity has been articulated in the form of group rights. The focus on group rights feeds into exclusive forms of identity politics. The majority–minority conundrum from the nineteenth century onwards has been articulated in terms of separate electorates, weightages and then in the twentieth century, in terms of parity between Congress and the Muslim League, and in Pakistan expressed in terms of One-Unit and the quota system and now Mohajir demands. The assumption which runs through this whole argument is that there is homogeneity within groups, that they are not differentiated in terms of class, gender and generation and that whatever advantage may be accessed would be distributed equally. But this is clearly not the case. There is thus a need to accept cultural diversity as a human right. It seems that Charles Taylor's argument about absence of recognition being harmful can actually be located in the individual in terms of a human right, rather than a group right. By investing cultural rights in the individual as human rights, then, difference and diversity could be accommodated without going down the road of communalism. The protection of individual human rights would impact on community without encouraging enclosure and possibly avoid group conflict. Concretely, if you take the Mohajir example, the issue substantively is about economic development for socially marginalised groups in the Mohajir community. The leadership comes from the lower middle-class and middle-class, precisely the groups most affected by competition from Pakhtuns and Punjabis and not the Mohajir elite. This same point has been made by Ranger who argues that there is a need for reconfiguration of universalistic values that can accommodate diversity and difference in the wider sense and simultaneously give greater emphasis to development.[35]

Conclusion

Identity politics in its different manifestations has been a recurrent and almost intractable problem for the Pakistan state. Its origins lie in the formation of Pakistan itself and in particular in the prevalence of the exclusive nature of the hegemonic discourse. It is exclusive in a cultural sense in that it is dominated by a Punjabi–Pakhtun military–bureaucratic oligarchy. Without the restructuring of this hegemonic discourse, identity politics will remain an intractable problem. Such a reconstruction would require a major reform of the federal structure which implies that new, more universalistic, notions of the nation need to be formed which are more prepared to recognise cultural difference and diversity. It is also important that greater decentralisation of power takes place and that local institutions become more vigorous. There is, however, the danger that this could lead to local hegemonic discourses. It is, therefore, necessary to introduce multicultural policies which recognise diversity and difference not in the form of group rights but rather on the basis of individual human rights. This implies that there would be a need for constitutional reform.

Notes

1. For the importance of partition as a device for managing ethnic conflict, see John McGarry and Brendon O'Leary, 'Introduction: The Macro-political Negotiation of Ethnic Conflict', in John McGarry and Brendon O'Leary (eds), *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation* (London: Routledge, 1993).
2. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, reprinted 1978), 12–13.
3. Terence Ranger, 'Introduction', in Terence Ranger, Y. Samad and O. Stuart (eds), in *Culture, Identity and Politics: Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996).
4. Rational choice theory understands ethnicity in terms of the wishes and actions of individual actors interacting with political structures and processes. A rational actor responding to different structures of opportunities at different times. Subarat Mitra, cited by Gurharpal Singh in 'What is Happening to the Political Science of Ethnic Conflict', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 3, 2 (1996).
5. T. Ranger, 'Introduction', in *Culture, Identity and Politics*.
6. Stuart Hall, 'Politics of Identity', in Ranger, Samad and Stuart, *Culture, Identity and Politics*.
7. Susan Benson, 'Asians have Culture, West Indians have Problems: Discourses of Race

and Ethnicity in and out of Anthropology', in Ranger, Samad and Stuart, *Culture, Identity and Politics.*

8. Nasreen Ali, Pat Ellis and Zaffar Khan, 'The 1990s: A Time to Separate British Punjabi and British Kashmiri Identity', in Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot (eds), *Punjabi Identity: Continuity and Change* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996).
9. Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Yunas Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937–1958* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995).
10. Gurharpal Singh, 'The Partition of India as State Contraction: Some Unspoken Assumptions', paper presented at the 14th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Copenhagen University, 21–24 August 1996.
11. Yunas Samad, 'Pakistan or Punjabistan: Crisis of National Identity', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 2, 1 (1995).
12. Tariq Rahman, 'Language and Politics in a Pakistan Province: The Sindhi Language Movement' *Asian Survey*, 35, 11 (November 1995). Tariq Rahman, 'The Pashto Language and Identity-formation in Pakistan', *Contemporary South Asia*, 4, 2 (1995).
13. The MQM represented a shift for many Mohajirs from supporting religious parties to extolling ethnicity. Altaf Hussain was initially a leader of the Jamaat-i-Islami's student wing. He became disillusioned with the organisation due to its domination by Punjabis. In response to this he along with others in 1978 formed the All-Pakistan Mohajir Student Organisation (APMSO) which in 1986 broadened into the MQM.
14. Charles Kennedy, 'The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindhi', *Asian Survey*, 31, 10 (October 1991). Iftikhar Malik, 'Ethno-Nationalism in Pakistan: A Commentary on Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz (MQM) in Sindh', *South Asia*, 18, 21 (1995).
15. Gurharpal Singh, 'The Partition of India as State Contraction: Some Unspoken Assumptions', paper presented at the 14th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Copenhagen University, 21–24 August 1996.
16. Farzana Shaikh, *Community and Consensus in Islam: Muslim Representation in Colonial India, 1860–1947*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
17. Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil.*
18. S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1975), vol. 7.
19. Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia*; Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil.*
20. The Awami League had been founded by Shaheed Suhrawardy, who had led the last Muslim League government of united Bengal, and had deep roots in East Pakistan. In the late 1950s it was the only political party with all-Pakistan pretension and the military coup was primarily designed to keep it from coming to power.
21. Samad, 'Pakistan or Punjabistan'.
22. Gowher Rizvi, 'Ethnic Conflict and Political Accommodation in Plural Societies: Cyprus and Other Cases', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 31, 1 (March 1993).
23. Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia.*
24. Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil.*

25. Farhat Haq, 'Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilization', *Asian Survey*, 35, 11 (November 1995), 1001.
26. Krishna Tummala, 'India's Federation under Stress', *Asian Survey*, 32, 6 (June 1992).
27. J.S. Furnival, *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma, Netherlands and India* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), 304–305.
28. M.G. Smith, *The Plural Society in the British West Indies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, reprint 1974), 75–91.
29. Leo Kuper and M.G. Smith (eds), *Pluralism in Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, reprint 1971), 440, 444.
30. Charles Taylor, 'The Politics of Recognition', in David Theo Goldberg (ed.), *Multiculturalism: A Critical Leader* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994), 75.
31. Arend Lijphart defined consociational democracy in terms of four principles (*a*) Coalition of all ethnic groups in the establishment of the government; (*b*) an ethnic veto which would allow any group to prevent legislation which it considered inimical to its group interest; (*c*) proportional representation to allow ethnic minorities to participate in government; and (*d*) a loose federation or even confederation which would allow for segmental autonomy. Arend Lijphart, 'Conception and Federation: Conceptual and Empirical Links', *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 12, 3 (September 1979).
32. Ian Talbot, 'Back to the Future? The Punjab Unionist Model of Consociational Democracy for Contemporary India and Pakistan', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 3, 1 (1996) 65–75.
33. Kennedy, 'The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh'.
34. Ibid.
35. Ranger, 'Introduction', in *Culture, Identity and Politics*.

The Unidentical Punjab Twins: Some Explanations of Comparative Agricultural Performance since Partition

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The Indian and Pakistani Punjabs, divided by an arbitrary international border amidst painful and bloody partition which uprooted over 8 million people in 1947, provide an interesting case study in comparative agrarian performance and development. More generally the socio-economic and industrial experiences of the two regions also provide some interesting insights into the nature of centre–state relations within the political systems of the two-nation states in which the two regions are located. Both regions have historically been most developed and continue to remain so today. However, the states play very different roles within the national context—in Pakistan the Punjab state is perceived as 'dominating' the political and economic system, whereas the Indian Punjab remains a peripheral region despite its continuing role as the breadbasket of India.

Both Punjabs have achieved remarkable economic success in the last 50 years but in a number of leading socio-economic indicators East Punjab outperforms West Punjab. This is even more remarkable given that West Punjab started off at the point of partition with a much higher level of resource endowment. Drawing on other studies on comparative performance of Third World regions, this article attempts to explain the reasons behind East Punjab's superior agricultural performance. Three broad core variables—differences in agrarian structure; role of national and regional state policies; and quality of human resources—are identified as being important in any explanation of the comparative performance of the two regions.

Introduction

The Indian and Pakistani Punjabs, divided by an arbitrary international border amidst painful and bloody partition which uprooted over

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8 million people in 1947, provide an interesting case study—according to Sims,[1] almost a controlled experiment—in comparative agrarian performance and development. More generally the socio-economic and industrial experiences of the two regions also provide some interesting insights into the nature of centre–state relations within the political systems of the two-nation states in which the two regions are located. Both regions have historically been most developed and continue to be so today. However, the states play very different roles within the national context. In Pakistan the Punjab state, comprising around 26 per cent of total area and a population of 47.3 million representing 56 per cent of total population, appears to 'dominate' the political and economic system with other provinces often perceiving themselves as relatively disadvantaged and victims of Punjabi hegemony.[2] In contrast, the Indian Punjab, comprising only 1.57 per cent of total area and a population of 16.8 million in 1981 representing a mere 2.5 per cent of the total, the complaint usually runs the other way, that is, despite Punjab's significant contribution to Indian foodgrain production and procurement (during 1991–92 the percentage share to the central pool in wheat and rice was 71.5 and 46.7, respectively), the state remains at the margin of Indian politics and is perceived by the majority Sikh community in the state as deprived and discriminated against, especially in terms of industrial development. Certainly in terms of rates of urban industrialisation, diversification of the economic structure and export performance, the Pakistani Punjab is at a qualitative advantage.[3]

The two Punjabs have pretty much the same climate, started off with similar agro-ecological and land tenure systems, and share a common culture, language, historical tradition and institutional arrangements.[4] Furthermore, both regions have since the mid-1960s experienced rapid technological change associated with the so-called green revolution technology. Yet in terms of agricultural and rural development, the Indian Punjab has shown superior performance.[5] For example, over the period 1965–66 and 1981–82, East Punjab recorded agricultural growth rates of 4.5 per cent per annum whilst West Punjab achieved a more modest 3.5 per cent per annum growth rate. Despite the fact that partition had left West Punjab with 62 per cent of the land, 55 per cent of the population, around 80 per cent of the united Punjab's irrigation facilities, most of its rural electricity and roads, the East Punjab quickly overcame these disadvantages and continued on a remarkable path of agrarian performance, totally reversing the experiences of the colonial period. Up until the mid-1980s, agricultural growth rates, yields of major crops, and

Table 1

Yields Per Hectare of Major Agricultural Crops in East and West Punjab
(Kg/Hectare)

Year	*Wheat*		*Rice*		*Sugarcane*		*Maize*		*Gram*		*Cotton*	
	EP	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*
1970–71	2,238	1,189	1,765	1,554	4,117	3,610	1,555	1,111	797	529	399	364
1980–81	2,730	1,643	2,733	1,616	5,526	3,922	1,602	1,262	582	400	329	339
1989–90	3,593	1,825	3,510	1,528	6,312	4,156	1,902	1,367	712	543	591	560
1992–93	3,770	1,946	3,371	1,579	6,141	4,302	2,297	1,357	672	344	591	543

Source: Calculated from Table 6.7, *Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1993* and Table 3.5, *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook, 1994.*

rates of mechanisation, consumption of power, fertilisers, pesticides, etc.—traditionally, all indicators of a highly capitalist form of agriculture—were found to be significantly above those of West Punjab. Even today, as will be argued later, data indicate that yields of major crops of the region are significantly higher in East Punjab helped by heavy applications of chemical fertilisers and intensity of irrigation (see Tables 1 and 2). The question under discussion would therefore seem to be a fairly straightforward one: why should two quite similar and predominantly agrarian regions show such remarkable divergence in agricultural and socio-economic performance? In this article an attempt is made to provide a cursory review of the major agro-economic-based hypotheses offering explanations of differential performance.

Table 2

Consumption of Chemical Fertilisers in East and West Punjab

Year	*Nitrogen*		*Phosphate*		*Potash*		*Total*	
	EP	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*
1985–86	787	1128.2	287	350.3	24	33.2	1098	1511.7
1988–89	796	1325	301	390.4	20	24.4	1117	1739.8
1989–90	818	1467.6	315	382.4	12	40.1	1145	1890.1
1990–91	877	1471.6	328	388.5	15	32.8	1220	1892.9
1992–93	934	1635.3	254	488.2	11	24.1	1199	2147.6

Source: Table 6.23, *Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1993* and Table 4.10, *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook, 1994.*

Despite its potential as an interesting case study offering vital policy lessons for other developing agrarian regions in Third World countries, there is a dearth of literature on evaluation of the comparative performance of the two regions. In this context, Sims' work was long overdue and represented a welcome contribution to the development literature. Using a multi disciplinary approach, Sims argued that the superior agricultural performance of East Punjab, as demonstrated by almost twice the rate of productivity of its western counterpart, owes its origins to the well-established facilities in social infrastructure, higher irrigation intensity of private tubewells, a greater use of fertilisers and insecticides and a more stable price policy towards agriculture in India than in Pakistan. These policies are then traced back to the nature of the political regimes and the consequent role of political leadership in the two countries. The emphasis is naturally on the public policy responses generated by the two political regimes. Given the lack of literature in

this area, Sims' laudable work provided a useful benchmark for evaluating divergent performance and in directing future research. Unfortunately, despite the book having appeared eight years ago, the research challenge offered by Sims has not been taken up and comparative studies on the Punjabs have not materialised.

There is one major caveat which needs to be borne in mind. It is perhaps important to acknowledge that geographical size matters and thus comparisons between the two regions may remain a meaningless task. This line of reasoning is rejected here on the grounds that it underestimates the degree of common heritage of the region and its high level of economic integration under colonial agrarian policy. It also underplays the potential role of public policy in post-colonial settings. Thus we must seek other explanations for the neglect of analysis of comparative performance. One important reason for lack of literature and research in this field is related to the 'unfriendly' and cold-war-stained Indo-Pak relations which ensure that communication channels and information flows between the two regions (and even the nation-states) remain highly limited and whatever information filters through tends to be distorted by government-owned or regulated electronic media. Furthermore, as Jalal has forcefully argued with reference to general scholarship on partition,

> 'the few intellectuals who have sought to transcend the limiting constraints of their nation-states are constantly reminded of their national origins in the critiques and counter-critiques that have characterised partition historiography. Even non-partisan scholarship rarely escapes being labelled 'made in India' or 'made in Pakistan'.[6]

A further reason for the lack of literature is the non-availability of comparable secondary data of the post-colonial period and hence the gaps have to be filled in either by fieldwork (as was the case with Sims) and/or through inferences and anecdotal evidence. Secondary data on West Punjab in the public domain are particularly scanty, often aggregated and qualitatively inferior when compared with East Punjab. East Punjab's annual Statistical Abstract published by the Economic and Statistical Organisation, in contrast, is extremely detailed, giving us district-level information on every item conceivable capable of enumeration. With few exceptions, however, data analysis and interpretation still leave a lot to be desired.

Share of the Spoils at Partition and its Impact

The partition of Punjab remains unparalleled in terms of the numbers involved and the suddenness of the exchange of populations—over 8 million to be transferred within a period of only three months. Furthermore, unlike some other earlier examples of exchanges of population, the minorities forced to leave had no constitutional guarantees to compensate them for the full value of the property that was to be left behind.[7] In the case of East and West Punjab the people were compelled to quit their assets and homes under conditions of communal butchery which claimed between half to a million lives.[8]

The partition of Punjab was conceived as a corollary to the partition of India and the machinery for division of Punjab was to closely resemble that for the country as a whole. With less than four months before both countries were expected to take over their affairs from the British, a number of hastily conceived committees were convened. The job of recommending the criteria for allocation of resources and setting up the administration for overseeing the partition fell to the Punjab Partition Committee comprising two representatives from each part of Punjab. This Committee in turn was guided by seven expert committees covering different items/resources to be divided. The division of assets and liabilities was the most contentious issue and after lengthy deliberations ending in a Arbitral Tribunal adjudication, the assets and liabilities of the united Punjab were to be adjusted for the purposes of financial settlement in the ratio of 60 per cent for West Punjab and 40 per cent for East Punjab. This ratio, used for all future financial adjustments, appeared to be about right averaging for population, territory and revenue contribution of East and West Punjab.[9]

As a result of forced migration, on balance, Sikh and Hindu landholders bore the brunt of losses. According to an early Punjab government source, out of the 18.8 million cultivable acres in West Punjab, about 6.7 million (around 36 per cent of the total) belonged to non-Muslims who paid about 34 per cent of land revenue. In contrast Muslims in East Punjab owned 4.7 million cultivable acres (around 33 per cent) out of a total of 14.2 million acres and paid only 27 per cent of land revenue. On migration Sikhs and Hindus had left behind about 2 million acres in excess of what Muslims had left in East Punjab. Furthermore, East Punjab's share of canal irrigated water amounted to only 3 million out of a total of over 14 million acres—a mere 21 per cent. East Punjab,

with equity considerations in mind, adopted the sliding-scale formula given in Table 3 for allocating land to refugees.

Table 3

Formula for Allotment of Land to Refugees in East Punjab (in standard acres)

Area Abandoned	*Area Allotted*	*% Allotted*
10	7.5	75
30	21	
40	27	
50	32.5	
60	37.5	
100	51.5	51.5
150	66.5	
200	79	
250	89	
500	126	25.2
1,000	176.5	17.65
3,000	281.33	
4,000	326.5	
5,000	376.5	7.53

Source: M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes* (1954), 99.

The dramatic scaling down of allotted land relative to abandoned land had a profound effect on the political economy of East Punjab agriculture. Dispossessed of adequate fertile and irrigated land the erstwhile wealthier canal colonist refugee farmers began to engage in owner-cultivation and to put in extra physical (and financial) effort to eke out subsistence living. If anything, their greater level of adversity prompted new forms of risk-taking and adoption of more progressive farming methods unlike in pre-partition days when many were content to lease out land on tenancy.

The unevenness of resource redistribution was reflected in other spheres as well: for instance, refugees from West Punjab left behind 154,000 houses in the towns compared to East Punjabi refugees who left behind only 11,200 houses. In terms of shops and business premises abandoned, refugees from West Punjab left behind 51,000 whereas East Punjabi Muslims left behind only 17,000. Finally, as Table 4 shows, there was also wide disparity in the occupational skills of people involved in the transfer. As the table indicates, the migration of skilled and semi-skilled Muslims from East Punjab would have had crippling effect on industry, especially on the garment and hosiery sectors in which

they predominated. It has been suggested that the East Punjab region's relative backwardness in terms of industrialisation is partly due to its failure to fully recover this loss in the post-partition period. East Punjab still continues to provide unprocessed raw cotton to textile and garment manufacturers in the Bombay subregion of Maharashtra.

Table 4

Occupational Structure in East and West Punjab (in lakhs)

Hereditary Occupation	*Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab*	*Muslims in East Punjab*
Agriculture	8.2	29.6
Traders	14.01	2.79
Weavers	00.08	3.70
Shoemakers	1.25	1.64
Carpenters	0.56	0.79
Blacksmiths	0.57	N/A
Potters	0.45	1.64
Dyers	0.04	0.41
Bakers and water carriers	0.57	1.84
Barbers	0.17	0.86
Sweepers	2.10	0.07
Washerman	0.05	0.52
Tailors	0.02	0.08
TOTAL	28.07	43.94

Source: Economy of Pakistan (Government Publication, 1958), 397.

As a corollary, the newly migrated skilled labour in West Punjab was not able to use those skills despite high levels of demand for goods they could potentially produce since similar factories and workshops or raw materials did not exist.

In conclusion, unevenness in the distribution of spoils, it is suggested, had different effects in the two regions. In East Punjab as the resources left behind were greater and geographical size represented an important constraint, the 'sense of loss' was felt more acutely. Thus the need for more rapid asset accumulation became more imperative. Certainly, as has been argued by Randhawa[10] and Nair,[11] the appearance of more intensive forms of agricultural practices and greater motives for savings can partly be explained by the deep sense of economic and psychological loss suffered by uprooted refugees.

Evaluating Comparative Performance

Given that the agricultural sector in both regions still plays a pivotal role in their continued success, in this section my main emphasis is on examining determinants of agrarian performance. Obviously a more comprehensive study would also need to consider the differing patterns of industrial development as the two regions continue to diversify and reduce their dependence on agricultural production.

One possible approach in evaluating comparative economic performance would be to list a catalogue of causes of *slow* agricultural growth in West Punjab and one of *high* growth in the East Punjab. East Punjab's strengths would then be West Punjab's weaknesses and vice versa. Having identified the variables the researcher could then, perhaps, prioritise the causal factors according to the strengths of available empirical evidence, theoretical formulation utilised or simply leave it to the reader to reach his or her conclusions. The above is quite a legitimate and fruitful methodology and is often employed in the development studies literature where the development strategies of two regions or countries are being compared and evaluated. Examples of this include attempts to explain the disparate experiences of the Latin American and East Asian economies and explanations for the successful diffusion of green revolution technology in South Asia relative to Sub-Saharan African countries. Any attempt, however, must identify the *core* causal factors in explaining differentials in performance. What is offered below is a brief outline of what could be considered as *three* fairly broad *core* explanations. No attempt has been made here to provide any 'hard' empirical support to these explanations although the explanations chosen are prominent in the literature evaluating agricultural performance of the two regions and in the very few studies evaluating comparative performance. The following can be identified as the *core* explanations: (*a*) differences in the agrarian structure; (*b*) role of national and regional state policies; (*c*) development and quality of human resources. These three categories are not mutually exclusive. Rather, it is strongly argued that it was the unique interaction among these three variables which enabled East Punjab to be transformed from a state which had a 35,000 tonne deficit in foodgrains at partition to become the 'granary' of India. West Punjab, too, has maintained its position as the dominant surplus-producing province of Pakistan.

Differences in Agrarian Structure

The structure of landownership is the main component of any agrarian structure. The agrarian structure of East Punjab, it is argued, has proved to be more conducive and adaptable to the development of capitalist agriculture than was the case for West Punjab.[12] Despite numerous attempts at institutional change via land reforms and tenancy legislation, the structure of landownership in West Punjab still remains relatively concentrated and continues to militate against generating a higher growth in output.[13] Furthermore, a large proportion of the cultivated area remains under a tenurial system, mainly sharecropping, in which neither the tenant nor the landlord has any incentive to partake in productivity-raising investments. Admittedly landholdings, especially operational holdings, are also concentrated in East Punjab but the degree of concentration is much higher in West Punjab. Although comparable data are difficult to come by, Table 5 provides some indication of the relative differences in landholding structures in the two regions. Whereas in West Punjab large landlords—who are often engaged in pre-capitalist economic activity and often content with being absentee landlords given that land is perceived to be a political rather than a commercial commodity—still dominate the rural scene, in East Punjab the majority of the area is under owner-cultivation, predominantly in the hands of the middle and rich peasantry. Owner-cultivation and smaller size of holdings, helped by effective land consolidation and land reform policies, have proved to be a vital combination in East Punjab's success. Perhaps the relevant question here is why the large landowners in West Punjab, given their superior resource endowments and potential ability to fully exploit economies of scale, do not engage on the same scale of agrarian capital accumulation as their East Punjabi counterparts. Do they perhaps have much greater access to alternative investment opportunities offering better rates of return than crop production? Or is it because the West Punjabi landlord has been unable to shake off the remnants of a feudal hangover in which political status and the ability to exercise extra-economic leverage is deemed more important than the goal of capitalist profit maximisation?

The major effect of the differences in agrarian structure (as also reflected in the differences in political power structures) has important implications for the manner and intensity of utilisation of new technology as and when it became available. In West Punjab a *small* minority of large landowners controlling a majority of the land and monopolising

Table 5

Agrarian Structure 1980–1981

East Punjab *Number of Operational Holdings*			*West Punjab* *Distribution of Landownership*				
Size (Hectares)	*% Number*		*Size (Hectares)*	*Owners %*		*Area %*	
Up to 2	38.62	76.83	Up to 2.5	68.8	88.7	25.8	9.9
2–5	38.21		2.5–5	19.9		24.1	
5–10	7.8		5–10	7.8		19.2	
10–20	6.00		10–20	2.3		12.6	
20–40	1.06	1.19	20–40	0.7	1.1	9.1	12.7
40+	0.13		40+	0.4		3.6	

Source: Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1993 and Mahmood Hasan Khan, 'The Structural Adjustment Process and Agricultural Change in Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s', *The Pakistan Development Review*, 33, 4, part I (Winter 1994), 533–91.

the agricultural inputs market, largely appropriated the benefits, whereas in East Punjab, it was both the middle and rich peasants, operating most of the land, who seized the opportunities for capitalist agriculture. Thus in the former case benefits remained restricted to a small minority whereas in the latter benefits were diffused throughout the peasantry, albeit disproportionately.[14]

National and Regional State Policies

National and regional state policies have undoubtedly been a major factor in explaining the differential performance and especially so when combined with the differences in the prevailing agrarian structures. Although the nature of the nation state differs markedly—one a parliamentary democracy[15] and the other, for most part of its history an authoritarian state but in recent years trying desperately to consolidate a fragile democracy—policies towards agriculture, especially in terms of price incentives and procurement, have been broadly similar. The green revolution agricultural strategy in both regions was initiated because of the compelling need for both nation-states to feed their population within the context of declining foreign exchange reserves and external pressure.[16] In fact, empirical evidence seems to suggest that West Punjabi farmers have had a better deal, especially in terms of price incentives for some

major crops. Whilst, however, the agricultural pricing and procurement policy displays major similarities, the constitutional form of the Indian state gave the East Punjab regional state greater room to manoeuvre. The Indian constitution gives the central government power and responsibility to guide economic development and the union government consequently has authority over a variety of areas, including all major industrial development as well as the power to collect revenue via direct and indirect taxes. At the same time, the constitution gives to regional states *alone* the power to tax and regulate agriculture.[17] Although, therefore, the constitution gives central government a bias towards urban development through industrial and commercial growth, state governments are more oriented towards agricultural concerns and constituencies. In many ways, the success story of East Punjab appears very much to be the result of this 'relative autonomy' which the regional state enjoys in its policy towards agriculture and rural development.[18] All East Punjab state governments, irrespective of their political configuration or socio-economic background of their party leaders, have pursued vigorous programmes for rural development with remarkable continuity. The development of agriculture has been the uppermost priority of each successive government. In contrast, as has been suggested by Sims and others, in Pakistan the Muslim League appeared to lack mass support in rural areas. The middle peasantry was numerically small and thus had little political clout. Given that the political institutions were rather weakly developed, landed aristocracy and bureaucrats tended to predominate in public policy decision-making. The major thrust of economic policies was to serve the needs of cities and industrial establishments rather than disturb prevailing rural power relations. Ironically, this 'urban bias' would partly explain the successes of West Punjab over the East Punjab in terms of higher degree of industrialisation in the urban centres, economic diversification within the regional economy and superior export performance especially in foodgrains.[19]

Thus given the above constitutional arrangements coupled with prevailing incentive mechanisms within the agrarian structure, East Punjab was able to undergo a very early, effective and successful programme of land consolidation and irrigation development.[20] Besides these, as has been ably documented by Chadha,[21] the East Punjab government took upon itself the task of building infrastructural facilities such as rural education, power development, cooperative credit, rural link roads, agricultural research and extension services,[22] foodgrain marketing and procurement agencies. The major cost of building these infrastructural

facilities was borne by the state government itself, although generous per capita central government assistance in the first three Five Year Plans helped in sustaining a high per capita development expenditure with a marked 'rural bias'. Since the mid-1960s, however, East Punjab has been able to maintain its leading position in terms of per capita development expenditure and per capita income growth by relying largely on its own resources.

In sum, the tremendous investment in infrastructural facilities, including education, made by the East Punjab government proved highly effective in the adoption and diffusion of the new wheat high-yielding varieties which became available around 1966–67. The same infrastructure was also able to fully accommodate the diffusion of rice, cotton and sugarcane high-yielding varieties which became more widely available from the early 1970s. It is thus the lack of this infrastructural prerequisite in West Punjab which largely explains why the agricultural growth rate of West Punjab lags behind that of East Punjab.

Quality and Development of Human Resources

Over the past couple of decades human resources and human resource development have come to be seen as important variables contributing to and explaining economic development. The sustained growth experienced by East Asian economies, referred to by the World Bank as the 'Economic Miracle', has emphasised the important role that investments in human capital play in the process of industrialisation.[23] The remarkable success of East Asian economies, now spreading to South East Asia, has been attributed to their governments' determined policies towards provision of universal primary education and meeting basic needs including health and public housing. All of these policies are assumed to directly contribute towards increasing labour productivity, flexibility and adaptability to change. It is a well-documented fact that East Punjab's improved economic performance is closely related to its superior quality of human capital. This is clearly reflected in differences in the number of medical institutions and literacy rates in the two regions (for details see Tables 6, 7 and 8). Although comparable data on education and health expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure for the two regions are not available, certain inferences can be drawn from national statistics. Pakistan's meagre allocation of resources towards education and health—2.4 per cent and 0.7 per cent of GNP in 1994–95, respectively—is a dire reflection of its policy towards human resource

development, notwithstanding recent initiatives such as 'Basic Education for All', 'Social Action Programme' and 'Programmes for Balanced Social Development'.[24]

Table 6

Medical Institutions, Dispensaries and Beds in East and West Punjab

Year	*Hospitals*		*Dispensaries*		*Primary Health Centres*		*Beds in Hospitals & Dispensaries, etc*	
	EP	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*	*EP*	*WP*
1985	258	246	1,790	1,138	130	N/A	22,104	25,827
1990	219	257	1,473	1,168	442	N/A	24,179	32,981
1993	205	288	1,462	1,405	446	N/A	24,742	38,708

Source: Calculated from Tables 19.2 and 19.6, *Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1994* and Table 13.2, *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook, 1994.*

Notes: Figures for Primary Health Centres for East Punjab include Comm. Health Centres.

N/A = Not available separately but included in hospitals as some hospitals and dispensaries have been converted to Rural Health Centres or Units.

Table 7

Newspapers and Periodicals in East and West Punjab

Year	*East Punjab*	*West Punjab*
1985	651	941
1990	741	2,197
1993	690	422

Source: Calculated from Table 32.2, *Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1993* and Table 15.1, *Pakistan Statistical Yearbook, 1994.*

Table 8

Literacy Ratios in East and West Punjab, 1981 and 1991

	East Punjab (1981)	*East Punjab (1991)*	*West Punjab (1981)*	*Pakistan (1994 estimate)*
Total	40.86	58.51	27.4	37
Urban	55.63	72.08	46.7	58
Rural	35.21	52.77	20.0	28
Male	47.16	65.66	36.8	49
Female	33.69	50.41	16.8	24

Source: Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 1984 and *1992* and *Economic Survey, 1994-95*, Government of Pakistan, Finance Division.

Note: Literacy ratios are based on population aged 6 and above for East Punjab and aged 10 and above for West Punjab. Literacy ratios not available for West Punjab for 1991.

Furthermore, many writers have emphasised the important role played by non-economic factors by asserting that there is a close correlation between culture or cultural endowments and economic development.[25] Again, translated in terms of the debates on the dynamic Asian economies, there is much talk of the positive role of culture and especially of the neo-Confucian ethical value system in their successful development.[26]

The debate on the role of values in economic development is not new especially in relation to Asian economies. The debate started with Marx well over a hundred years ago and has been continued by writers such as Max Weber and more recently by Nobel Prize winning economists Arthur Lewis and Gunnar Myrdal. All of them thought that values had the capacity either to facilitate or to impede economic development. Weber for instance thought that the 'Protestant ethic' had been a major factor in the development of capitalism in northern Europe and North America and it was the absence of this in Asia which was likely to impede its rapid economic development. Gunnar Myrdal, in his 2,200-odd page magnum opus entitled *Asian Drama* also painted a very gloomy and dispiriting assessment of Asia's economic prospects blaming backwardness on 'irrational attitudes and outmoded institutions'.[27] Although Myrdal's 'institutionalist' approach provided a welcome alternative explanation to the conventional analysis of determinants of economic growth, with hindsight one can argue that he underestimated the potential for internally generated economic growth, especially in East Asia.

In this final section an attempt is made to identify and highlight some of the 'specific advantages' which East Punjab has enjoyed over West Punjab, especially in the post-colonial period. The reader is warned, however, that some of these arguments remain inconclusive and are subject to further rigorous empirical verification. The author is also fully aware that these arguments are open to charges of exaggeration, cultural relativism and ethnic stereotyping especially as nurtured under colonial rule in Punjab.[28] Collectively these arguments emphasise the importance of the human element and experience in agricultural development and performance *within a given set of enabling and conducive structural conditions*. Since the backbone of the agricultural prosperity in East Punjab are largely Sikhs, most of what follows relates specifically to this ethnic group.

One of the more challenging works to date relating to the area of study is a recent one by Upinder Jit Kaur which focuses on the relationship between the Sikh values and economic development. She argues that one of the reasons why scholars such as Max Weber found Hinduism

a negative factor in economic development of India was its overemphasis on 'other-worldly values'. Sikhism, in sharp contrast, emphasises 'this-worldly values' and does not consider poverty as the outcome of the inexorable law of fate, as ultimately individuals are masters of their own destiny. She argues that the attitude of Sikhs towards life, work, mobility, thriftiness and a belief in their own ability to improve their standard of living, has been pivotal in their onward march to material progress.[29]

Upinder Jit Kaur critically examines the Sikh value system in terms of its three basic dimensions, the scriptural value system, institutional framework and operational value system, in order to assess their consistency and compatibility with the idea of economic progress. By examining each of these dimensions she demonstrates clearly the ethos of progress envisioned within each one of them. By taking an integrated view of life, Sikhism aims to improve the human situation via moral, spiritual and economic progress. Thus all those spiritual activities which do not improve the human condition are treated as barren. Material possessions are deemed as necessary for sustaining life and the work ethic is treated as being no less important than worship. All of these ethical values are enshrined in the well-known phrase '*kirat karo, wand chhako, nam japo*' popularised in Sikh writings. Thus the Sikh way of life allows and promotes political and social activities in the cause of human welfare of both individuals and society as a whole.

An important aspect of the Sikh world-view is the ability of the individual to be creative and to harness the forces of nature in order to work towards the well-being of fellow individuals. The history of the Sikh people over the past couple of centuries or so has shown their tremendous success in harnessing natural resources. There are plentiful examples illustrating the Sikhs' ability to manoeuvre, to respond to opportunities, to experiment and to seek out new openings. Some specific instances which have been cited as being important for the economic prosperity of the Sikh community and the East Punjab region as a whole, are presented next.

First, historically the Punjab peasantry, especially the Sikh peasantry, has shown a much greater propensity towards mobility. Sikh migration to other areas of India, both rural and urban and overseas since the late nineteenth century is too well documented to be repeated here.[30] The important point, however, is that the migrants very rarely severed their links with Punjab.[31] In the post-colonial period, especially as a result of mass migration during the 1950s and 1960s, vast amounts of

regular remittances helped to boost and sustain agricultural investments.[32] In contrast, the degree of labour mobility in West Punjab has been relatively more recent and at a lower level.[33] Even after mass migration to the Gulf States, remittances in general did not end up in agricultural investments but rather went on purchases of consumption/consumer goods, house construction, etc.[34] It would not be an exaggeration to say that of all the different ethnic groups of united Punjab the Sikhs have made the most from the opportunities offered through Punjab's incorporation into the capitalist world economy via colonialism.[35]

Second, Sikh recruitment to the Indian army during the colonial period and even in the post-colonial period has been very high relative to the Sikhs' overall percentage in the Indian population. Army experience accumulated over several decades was beginning to be reflected in agricultural practices and performance either through use of better methods or techniques or through reinvestments into agriculture—it is not uncommon to find numerous large ex-army 'gentlemen farmers' in all districts of the Punjab. The learning of new skills and adaptation of new techniques and practices by this group had positive and significant demonstration effects on the attitudes of other groups of farmers. West Punjab has also been a significant recruitment ground for the Pakistan army but ex-army personnel appear not to have the same desire or inclination to engage in commercial farming. As Jalal has recently argued, it was the mainly Punjabi-dominated military–bureaucratic alliance which was instrumental in frustrating genuine land reform and other rural development policies.[36]

Third, and rather more contentiously, as has already been argued, the Sikh ethical system places great emphasis on the work ethic and agriculture, in fact, has always been regarded as the noblest of all professions. British administrators, notably Darling, commented consistently on the Sikhs' extraordinary farming skills, their ability to innovate and to take risks. Many Sikhs were, indeed, generously compensated to induce them to migrate to the canal colonies and help raise colonial crop production necessary to earn export revenue and to avert threats of famine elsewhere in India. In more recent times both Randhawa and Kusum Nair have talked in glowing terms of the sheer hard work undertaken by Sikh refugees in East Punjab and other neighbouring states, in the face of severe adversity after partition. Whilst one needs to remain vigilant against the ethnic hype, Sikh settler experiences throughout the globe do demonstrate the tenacity and opportunism inherent within the community.

Perhaps the overall inference being drawn here is that as a result of pre- and post-colonial policies East Punjab possesses an endowment of human resources which have proved to be qualitatively superior to West Punjab's. The comparative advantage in these was further boosted by state policies in the post-colonial period which placed special emphasis on rural development, especially on improving educational facilities. It is, therefore, not coincidental that West Punjab's literacy rate lags behind East Punjab's quite conspicuously, especially in terms of gender. As Table 8 clearly shows, whereas 35.21 per cent of rural population was literate in East Punjab in 1981, the corresponding figure was only 20 per cent for West Punjab with the gap widening since then. Given that the Sikh peasantry has not been burdened by feudal hangovers, it has been able to adapt and much more quickly take advantage of the opportunities offered by capitalist forms of agriculture. Furthermore, the Sikh peasantry has historically shown much greater responsiveness to price stimuli and has seized and exploited investment opportunities much more readily.[37]

Conclusion

This article has provided a cursory overview of the major debates on the differential agrarian performance in the two Punjabs. This differential performance is then discussed within the context of three broadly based explanatory variables drawn from the development literature. It is, of course, always dangerous to try to isolate two or three important variables in explaining differentials in economic performance whilst holding everything else constant. What is suggested here is that it is the combination or interaction of the three core variables discussed briefly in the preceding pages which has been the most significant. To be able to fully understand the differential performance of the two regions, there can be no substitute for detailed empirical investigation.

Notes

1. Holly Sims, *Political Regimes, Public Policy and Economic Development: Agricultural Performance and Rural Change in the Two Punjabs* (New Delhi: Sage, 1988).
2. For a recent discussion on this perspective, see Yunas Samad, 'Pakistan or Punjabistan: Crisis of National Identity', in Gurharpal Singh and Ian Talbot (eds), *Punjabi Identity: Continuity and Change* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996). See also his *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937–1958* (New Delhi: Sage, 1995).

3. See Lincoln Kaye, 'From Raj to Rebellion', *Far Eastern Economic Review* (23 June 1988), 72–77.
4. Sims, *Political Regimes*, 18.
5. There is still very little research on the comparative performance of the two Punjabs. Besides Sims' and Kaye's rather journalistic piece cited earlier, there was a short piece by H.S. Mavi, 'The Punjabs of India and Pakistan', *The Tribune*, (Chandigarh) 28 May 1992.
6. See Ayesha Jalal, 'Secularists, Subalterns and the Stigma of Communalism: Partition Historiography Revisited', *Modern Asian Studies*, 30, 3 (July 1996), 681–89.
7. Two previous similar cases that come to mind are, first, the exchange of around 2 million people between Greece and Turkey agreed by the Convention of La-Usanna in 1932 and, second, exchange between Bulgaria and Greece agreed by the Convention of Neviely in 1929. In the former case the exchange of populations was completed in one year and in the latter case the national minorities emigrating were guaranteed full compensation for properties left behind. For details see Stephan P. Landas, *The Exchange of Minorities* (New York, 1932).
8. There is still considerable inconsistency in the number of casualties recorded, partly reflecting the partisan partition historiography and partly the intensity of the trauma inflicted on the region where the priority for body count took second place. The casualty figures tend to vary between a minimum of 200,000 to a maximum of around 500,000.
9. For a detailed discussion of the administrative machinery set up leading up to and following the partition see Satya M. Rai, *Partition of Punjab* (Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1966) and Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab, 1947* (New Delhi: National Bookshop, 1991).
10. M.S. Randhawa was an ICS officer until 1949 when he was appointed as the Director-General of Rehabilitation in East Punjab. He later became the first Vice-Chancellor of the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana and has written many articles and books on the agrarian success of East Punjab. His experiences and tribulations are recorded in his *Out of Ashes, An Account of the Rehabilitation of Refugees from West Pakistan to the Rural Areas of East Punjab* (Bombay, 1954).
11. See Kusum Nair, *Blossoms in the Dust: The Human Factor in Indian Development*, (New York: Praeger, 1961). Having talked to a number of uprooted people in rural East Punjab Nair declares that 'if seized with the urge and curiosity, he will not hesitate to walk the universe in search of the atom. The characteristic tends to make him more mobile as well as more enterprising', 104.
12. There is voluminous literature on this dimension for both regions covering both the green revolution and post-green revolution periods. For a meticulous survey of the East Punjab experiences see G.K. Chadha, *The State and Rural Economic Transformation: The Case of Punjab 1950–1985*, (Delhi: Sage, 1986). For West Punjab experiences a very useful recent survey, among others, is Mahmood Hasan Khan's chapter on 'Agriculture', in William E. James and Subroto Roy (eds), *Pakistan's Political Economy: Towards an Agenda for the 1990s* (New Delhi: Sage, 1992).
13. It is generally acknowledged that land reform has been a failure in West Punjab as in Pakistan as a whole. For a discussion of reasons see 'Agriculture'; Ian Talbot, 'Survey of Agricultural Development in Western Punjab after 1947', unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Punjab Agriculture, Columbia University, 1 April 1995;

and Akmal Hussein, 'Land Reform in Pakistan: A Reconsideration', in Iqbal Kha (ed.), *Fresh Perspectives on India and Pakistan* (London: Bougainvillaea Book 1985).

14. There has been a lively debate on both sides of Punjab as to the differential benefits o the green revolution technology. Although, even now, opinions remain divided, th social polarisation thesis has stronger support in West Punjab given the nature o agrarian structure. For an elaboration of this view see Akmal Hussein, 'Technica Change and Social Polarization in Rural Punjab', in Karamat Ali (ed.), *The Politica Economy of Rural Development* (Lahore: Vanguard Publications, 1982); M.H. Khan *Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Publica tions, 1982); and Hamza Alavi, 'The Rural Elite and Agricultural Development in Pakistan', in R.D. Stevens, H. Alavi and P. Bertocci (eds), *Rural Development in Pakistan and Bangladesh* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1976).

15. The only exception at the national level was the brief Emergency period in 1977. In Punjab, however, democratic politics has been suspended far more often, on the last occasion lasting between 1987 and 92.

16. There is considerable literature on the historical origins of the green revolution in Sout Asia. For a discussion of the historical context see F.R. Frankel, *India's Gree Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs* (Princeton: Princeton Universit Press, 1971); and T.J. Byres, 'The Dialectic of India's Green Revolution', *South Asia Review*, 5, 2 (January 1972). For a discussion of the continuities in Indian agricultura policies see Pritam Singh, 'Political Economy of the British Colonial State and the Indian Nationalist State and the Agrarian-oriented Development Pattern in Punjab' *Indo-British Review*, 21, 1 (special issue on Punjab), 97–110.

17. For an elaboration of this perspective see Murray Leaf, *Songs of Hope: The Green Revolution in a Punjab Village* (New Jersey: Rutgero University Press, 1984).

18. The extent of the actual 'relative autonomy' of the East Punjab state is questionable. One could argue that the actual operation of the policy has meant growing centralisation of power in the hands of the union government. This centralised power is exercised through the various government-appointed commissions deciding policies on agricultural prices and costs, subsidies, and distribution of power and irrigation resources. For an interesting discussion of some of these relations see Pritam Singh, 'Federal Financial Arrangements in India with Special Reference to Punjab', *Australian Journal of Development Studies*, 9, 3(1993), 261–78.

19. For a concise summary of the reasons for 'urban bias' in West Punjab economic policies see Talbot, 'Survey of Agricultural Development'. See also Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

20. For an informative discussion of the successes of the earlier phase of land consolidation in East Punjab and its impact on investments in tubewells and agricultural productivity see Gyanesh Kudaisya, 'The Demographic Upheaval of Partition: Refugees and Agricultural Resettlement in India, 1947–67', *South Asia*, 18, special issue (1995), 73–94.

21. Chadha, *The State and Rural Economic Transformation*.

22. In this context, the role of the Punjab Agricultural University (Ludhiana) (PAU), first established in 1962 with M.S. Randhawa as its Founder–Vice-Chancellor, deserves

special mention. Since its opening the PAU has been in the forefront of agricultural research, teaching and extension education. It has also been recognised as a centre of excellence in terms of agricultural engineering and technology adaptation for developing efficient farming methods. The PAU has won a number of national and international awards for its contribution to the prosperity of Punjab and India. Recently it was declared the best agricultural university in the country and was selected for the first Best Institutional Award by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. For details see *The Tribune* (Chandigarh), 17 November 1996.

23. For details see *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*, World Bank Policy Research Report (Washington: OUP for World Bank, 1993).

24. These figures and new social initiatives are taken from the *Pakistan Economic Survey 1994/95* (Islamabad, 1996).

25. The specialist American journal *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, published by the University of Chicago for the past 45 years, is devoted entirely to considering the interface between economic development and cultural factors. In April 1988 it published a special supplement issue on the theme of human resources and economic development, containing articles by leading specialists in the field.

26. For a critical perspective on the debate on Asian values in Asian-Pacific development see Alan Dupont, 'Is there An "Asian Way"?', *Survival*, 38, 2 (Summer 1996), 13–33.

27. Quote taken from the publisher's jacket cover of Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, 3 vols (London: Allen Lane Penguin Press, 1968).

28. The 'martial races' theory is too well documented to be repeated here. For a recent treatment with respect to army recruitment see David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj* (London: OUP, 1995). Ethnic stereotyping in the rural economy of Punjab is epitomised in the well-known works of Calvert and Darling.

29. See Upinder Jit Kaur, *Sikh Religion and Economic Development* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1990).

30. See N. Gerald Barrier and Verne A. Dusenberry (eds), *The Sikh Diaspora: Migration and the Experience Beyond Punjab* (New Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1989).

31. For a discussion of these diasporic links see Darshan Tatla, 'Politics of Homeland: Ethnic Identity and Political Mobilisation among Sikhs in Britain and North America', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1995; and Shinder S. Thandi 'Dangerous Liaisons? An Insight into Economic and Social Linkages Between Diaspora Sikhs and Punjabi Villages', unpublished paper presented at the Conference on Punjab Agriculture, Columbia University, 1 April 1995.

32. For the role played by overseas remittances in East Punjabi villages see Shinder S. Thandi, 'Strengthening Capitalist Agriculture: The Impact of Overseas Remittances in Rural Central Punjab in the 1970s', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 1, 2 (July–December 1994) 239–70; Bruce LaBrack, 'The New Patrons: Sikhs Overseas', in Barrier and Dusenberry, *The Sikh Diaspora*; A.W. Helweg, *Sikhs in England: The Development of a Migrant Community* (Delhi: OUP, 1979).

33. There is considerable evidence of early Muslim migrants from the Punjab region. Ethnographic studies of the diaspora, however, tend to demarcate between Muslim, Hindu and Sikh migrants, downplaying their regionalised Punjabi character.

34. There is difference of opinion among scholars on the utilisation and hence impact of

remittances in rural areas. For West Punjab there is evidence which mainly suggests the consumption orientation of remittances. See, for instance, R. Ballard, 'The Context and Consequences of Migration: Jullundur and Mirpur Compared', *New Community*, 11, 4 (1983); G. Gunatilleke, *The Impact of Labour Migration on Households: A Comparative Study of Seven Asian Countries* (New York: United Nations Press, 1992). A more recent study by Richard H. Adams, Jr., 'Remittances, Inequality, Asset Accumulation: the Case of Rural Pakistan', in David O'Connor (ed.), *Development Strategy, Employment and Migration: Country Experiences* (Paris: OECD, 1996) has argued that external remittances have a significant positive effect on the accumulation of income-generating assets compared with internal remittances.

35. For a recent attempt at periodisation of Punjab history see Pritam Singh and Shinder S. Thandi, *Globalisation and the Region: Explorations in Punjabi Identity* (Coventry: Association for Punjab Studies, 1996).

36. Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia*.

37. For an overview of the investment activities of Sikh settlers in the canal colonies during colonial rule see Imran Ali, 'Sikh Settlers in Western Punjab during British Rule', in Singh and Thandi, *Globalisation and the Region*. For an excellent study of British agrarian policy and its impact see Imran Ali, *Punjab under Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

Punjabi Literature and the Partition of India

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This article deals with the portrayal of the 1947 partition in Punjabi literature. Entailing vivisection of land and dislocation of its people, partition was the first occurrence in Punjab of its kind on such a gigantic scale. Earlier invasions and strife were no match for the destitution and humiliation it meted out to people of all castes, classes, communities and religions. So traumatising was this event that Punjabi writers were forced to employ all genres for its portrayal. Since its traumatic aspect outweighed its dramatic and poetic facets, the short story came most naturally to be employed for the purpose. There was hardly any writer in Pakistan who could distinguish himself by writing on partition in Punjabi. So the article confines itself to Punjabi short story writers only of the Indian Punjab.

The 1947 partition that divided the subcontinent on communal lines defied the understanding of Indians in general. They looked on it as a curse that some invisible power had visited their pious and peace-loving country. The intelligentsia viewed it as a horror that put to shame the struggle for national independence believed to have been conducted on peaceful lines. For Punjabis in particular the partition was a holocaust. The likes of it had never occurred earlier on their soil, though from time immemorial Punjab had been open to invaders ranging from Greeks to Mughals and the Afghans. The result was the vivisection of the region, celebrated as one in folklore as well as literary discourse.[1]

This vivisection caused large-scale dislocation, forcing several million people[2] to migrate from east to west of the erstwhile Punjab and vice versa. The extent of destitution was such that most of them had to flee for their lives. As if this were not enough, acute humiliation was further in store for them with the murder of more than 200,000 persons[3] and

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the sexual violation of not less than 50,000[4] women, and that too within a short span of half a year or so.

The scars that the partition left on the commonsense[5] of the Punjabi people, irrespective of religion, caste, class, age and gender were agonising. To them it was perdition; it was a conspiracy hatched to derail their social regeneration; it was a calamity out to disrupt their centuries-old composite culture; last but not the least, they experienced it as a nightmare subverting human thinking and feeling ordained essential for progress and development.

For commonsense to take in the partition as perdition, conspiracy, calamity and nightmare was, in fact, natural. After all, commonsense is a complex of assumptions and beliefs generally derived from experience. Extrinsically episodic and disjointed, it lacks the potential to put forward a coherent view of life. With concreteness as its essential mark, it imbibes traces of the diverse lineages of history and multiple conflicts come to the fore on regional, linguistic and ethnic basis. With its principal elements derived from religion, it tends to define reality in anthropomorphic and anthropocentric terms. Constituting these factors in a specific way, the commonsense of the Punjabi people, irrespective of their religion, caste, class age and gender, could not forego the disposition to visualise the partition as such, that is, a momentous occurrence of insidious, diabolical, frightening and inscrutable proportions.

That the good sense of the intelligentsia should have engaged a different configuration of the partition was indeed a theoretical possibility. To realise it as such was expecting too much of the writers of the three main communities (Hindi, Muslim and Sikh). In this context then, good sense is a critical and coherent conception of the world conscious of its historical growth. Its forte lies in getting hold of other conceptions. For its own fecundity, good sense enters into discursive relationship with them and produces commonsense as well. As a result it encodes deeply poetic and dramatic moments in what commonsense decodes as traumatic in the first instance.[5]

So gigantic was the quantum of dislocation, disruption and desecration which the partition involved that for most Punjabi writers, whether Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, it was impossible to have a view of it different from the commonsense view of the people. Thus the corpus of writings to arise in Punjabi in the aftermath of the partition could rarely go beyond the perception put forward by commonsense at the time of its occurrence. The depth to be discerned and the elaboration to be encountered in the representation of communal orgy, frenzy, passion in

contrast to compassion, make them original only in the metaphorical sense. To be original in the etymological sense for exploring human experience to its roots or origins did not come naturally to most of the writings comprising this corpus.

For example, partition produced an outpouring of almost a score of novels[6] of which four were by Nanak Singh (1897–1971) alone. A couple of them each were penned by Sohan Singh Seetal (1908–), Surinder Singh Narula (1917–) and Amrita Pritam (1919–). While skill in story-telling, plot-construction, descriptive detail and character-delineation[7] is obvious in some of them, the profound perplexity experienced by the people regarding the event is not to be encountered in spite of the murders, rapes and abductions described in these novels. Whenever effort was made in these novels to embed wider political issues in social life, the result did not bear any fruit. In this regard Sohan Singh Seetal's novel *Tootan Wala Khoo* (Well with Mulberries Around) comes to mind in which evocation of the well for the country remains schematic and amorphous.

Several plays[8] also came out of the partition, of which two by Kartar Singh Duggal (1917–) and Kapur Singh Ghuman (1927–1980) are worthy of mention. Duggal's *Mitha Pani* (Sweet Water) seeks to bring out the dilemma of a refugee family. Settled upon a piece of land that is barren in contrast to the fertile one left behind, the members of the family have little interest in cultivating it. All their time passes either in recalling their life accross the border or in condemning what they encounter here. A Muslim girl, whose brief stay comes as a ray of hope, is repatriated to drive them into further despair. Idioms, phrases and proverbs are all that remain at their disposal to articulate this despair without adequate characterisation or dramatisation.

At this juncture many poems[9] were also published, of which one by Amrita Pritam got so much reception and exercised so much rueful effect, that on this score alone, she came to be known on either side of the border as the voice of the Punjab. Written as an invocation to Waris Shah, the most popular Punjabi poet in the eighteenth century, it sought to articulate through figural connection with Heer, the heroine of his masterpiece, the sufferings which womankind had to undergo in the course of the holocaust. The following are some of the couplets of this poem that still haunt the literary memory on either side of the Indo-Pakistan border:

Now I implore Waris Shah to rise from the graves,
And turn now some other leaf of Love's book.

Some one has poisoned water of all the five rivers,
And poisoned water has got into the fields now.

Blood is pouring and dripping down the graves,
With love-lorn damsels wailing at deserted places.

All are turned Kaidos to rob us of beauty and love,
From where may we invoke the like of your Muse now?

Now I implore Waris Shah to rise from the graves,
And turn now some other leaf of Love's book.[10]

For all the reception and effect the poem registered, its production seems to suffer from the unresolved discord between its figural and experiential poles. As a result its poetic discourse fails to articulate the feeling of pain as a unique experience.

In Dr Haribhajan Singh's (1921–) poems available in his collection *Lasan* (Wales), the excruciating feeling of pain becomes almost nightmarish. In the process its connection with the partition gets detached so as to render it general beyond the specific. The following lines bear ample testimony to this:

Go to sleep my Lord, for wild is gone the night,
Go to sleep my Lord, for dark has grown its effect.
In the dark has got lost the starry night,
With death's foul smell covering the whole earth.

Even towards the end of the poem an effort to retrieve specific recognition of the partition as a dreadful apocalypse, is nowhere in sight:

Go to sleep and keep not staring wide,
Starry morn will not be vanishing ever.
Lunacy to kill will not ever persist,
And blood will not ever flood the earth.
Life won't ever be waste as of tonight,
Go to sleep my Lord, for wild is gone the night.[11]

It is not surprising that these poems forego the cathartic moment that for Antonio Gramsci denotes 'the passage from the egoistic-passional

to the ethico-political . . . a source of new initiatives.'[12] Invoking either cultural oneness or individual difference, they minister to amnesia and angst only. For not hearkening to a renewed horizon of hope and alternative experience, they limit their appeal to appellation.

I

To the contrary, it is this cathartic moment towards which short stories dealing with partition seem directed, though to a varying extent. The notable ones authored by some twenty-five writers are about a hundred in number. Though repetitive in disposition, overlapping in motivation, and not always well-wrought in composition, a quarter of them at least are crucial for revealing how and with what difference the problematics of this occurrence got embedded in the commonsense of the people. Getting across its inchoate nature, half a dozen of them also underline the need to engage good sense for holding out a renewed horizon of hope and alternative zone of experience.

The factors responsible for partition are recalled or referred to in several of these short stories. In 'Janam Bhoomi'[13] (Native land) written by Devendra Satyarthi (1908), retribution for loving the birthplace is held responsible for the uprooting excruciatingly suffered by the people. Too much love even for one's place of birth is sinful because it decries the detachment so much sanctified in the traditional Indian ethos. In this story this notion figures as partly metaphysical and partly religious in import. Related to it is another story, 'Phatu Marasi' (Phatu, the low caste) by Gurbachan Bhullar (1937–) that places responsibility for partition on the supernatural. Accepted as retribution, it shows the characters going in for penitence. Recalling this, the interlocutor remarks: 'It was a deluge my lord, a dark deluge. The sanity of all vanished into thin air. None is to be blamed for that. It was some deluge that God had ordained.'[14]

As against these supramundane factors, mundane factors as well are held responsible. At another place in Satyarthi's story, the blame is put upon the British who, as their policy everywhere, altered the complexion of life. No doubt it was all done in their own interest, but for Indians to first approve and then to push the British out was sinful. In another story 'Chattu'[15] (Mortar) written by Sukhwant Kaur Mann (1937–) the blame for the dislocation is reserved for Jinnah and Jawaharlal Nehru almost in equal measure. It deals with the privations which an aged couple has to suffer even after emigrating to the Indian side. They are

so desperate that the wife, at least, has nothing but abuse for these perpetrators of the alleged crime. When a news broadcaster mentions their names, she begins abusing both of them. Even the old man's advice to the contrary does not deter her.

The incoherent and fragmentary way in which these various factors are held responsible for partition is fully characteristic of commonsense. The retributive and penitential factor is not elaborated with the subtlety and sobriety which disciplines of metaphysics and religion can naturally bring to bear upon the subject. Instead, elaboration gets banalised and banalisation in thinking, feeling and speaking, is the hallmark of commonsense. In keeping with this, exposition of the mundane factors precludes any sort of intellectual complexity. For example, the split attitude professed towards the British remains ambiguous. How the English-oriented education policy and the settlement of the people in the canal colonies endeared the British to the people does not become clear. How national popular feeling turned communal is not evident.

The hostility which the writers professed against Nehru and Jinnah was illustrative of the commonsense that they articulated. It does not critically and coherently examine whether Jinnah's intransigence or Nehru's equivocation was ultimately responsible for partition. By withholding judgement on the former, it does not accord approval to conventional historiography[16] that imparts to him total malignity for conjuring the sinister design of 'the two-nation theory' so as to destroy the eternally ordained unity of India. Likewise, by observing reticence in the case of the latter, it does not underline what revisionist historiography[17] has of late come to contend with with regard to Nehru's role in causing this disaster. According to this contention, Nehru with his ingenious stand, of unity being better than disunity but enforced unity being no solution to the problem, scuttled negotiations and prepared the ground for partition. Yet all the time the impression was created that it was Jinnah whose intransigence came in the way of resolving this intractable problem. By foregoing all this subtlety, the genetic attitude of the characters chooses to be banal instead. At the same time it keeps away from the demonology and hagiology which sophisticated attitude reserves for the leaders upon whose shoulders the responsibility for averting the catastrophe rested at that historical juncture.

As partition became an impending, albeit imminent reality, sweeping changes take place in the life of the people, ranging from assault in their homes to shelter in refugee camps, to be followed by migration. There are several short stories in which lineaments of these changes

acquire graphic detail. At least two are worthy of mention in this regard. One is 'Bhua Fatima' (Aunt Fatima) by Balwant Gargi (1916–) in which the focus is upon the behaviour of the people:

> The ditch of hatred between the Muslims and the Hindus was getting deeper. Leaders on both sides were raising slogans in favour of their respective religions. In temples and mosques, kirtans and qawalies were in full swing. Slogans were being trumpeted from both the sides. . . . Fanaticism was at its height.[18]

The short story 'Ulahna' (Complaint) by Kulwant Singh Virk (1920–87) takes into account 'the change' as it intrusively gets into the feelings and emotions of the people and obtrusively segregates members of one community from those of the other. The basis for this change is laid by rumours which begin to circulate of riots occurring at nearby places. Merging into the atmosphere, they begin to determine the environment itself. Thus the change that alienates them from their hearths, homes, crops and even the domestic animals—so inextricably a part of their living—becomes imperative. Driven by some unaccountable impulse, as it were, they take recourse to refugee camps. The following description sets forth a feel of the nuances this change involved:

> Within a day or so, ploughing came to a standstill. Those who used to sow seeds in the field, felt estranged. What use was the sowing of crops which they could not later on harvest? There was talk of burning down the houses which till then were kept spick and span by them. The people lost all their love for their houses, fields, oxen, buffaloes. They now thought of nothing else but to leave the place. Gradually, all the Hindu people of the area left for refugee-camps as crickets fly to one side when water flows into the field from the other. Within a week or so, the Hindu and Sikh people so segregated themselves from the Muslim population as village-women are wont to separate grains of one sort from those of another by winnowing them.[19]

However, only the lucky ones were destined to reach unobtrusive shelter in refugee camps. So many privations, traumas and tortures awaited them before the interim and transitory protection available in refugee camps guarded by the military personnel. As Sujan Singh (1909–92) reveals in his short story 'Manukh te Pashoo' (Man and Animal), pillaging of homes and hearths was the order of the day:

> Pillaging went on till 6 o'clock in the morning. People of other villages also came to know of it. The whole population seemed to have gathered there. Then the pillaged objects were carried away on carts. By morning, the doors, windows, supports and even machines of water-pumps, were removed.[20]

Such was the aggrandisement of its perpetrators that even brothels were not spared. As Surinder Singh Narula describes in 'Chhamo di Baithik'[21] (Chhamo's Parlour), even prostitutes were forced to announce their affiliations on religious lines, thus denoting that the marauders were more degenerate than those universally condemned women.

Not stopping at this, the murderers resorted to indiscriminate killing of helpless people. 'Bhootan di Khed'[22] (Play of Evil Spirits) by Sant Singh Sekhon (1908–) bears ample testimony to this horror perpetrated with impunity. The story begins with a graphic description of 50 Muslims, including women, children and aged people, kept confined in the *dharam-shala* of the village. They can go nowhere and even urinating is a problem for them. Then in groups of 10 each, they are driven to the nearby field to be done to death. In this case, the tide turns because there is among them a beautiful woman who fascinates one of the killers so much that on her consent to marry him, these helpless beings are blessed with reprieve. However, this is an exception and as exception it cannot be the rule. In Gurbax Singh Preetlari's 'Mubina ke Sukina'[23] (Mubina or Sukina) mortal panic grips the whole village, so much so that even the well-to-do have great difficulty in escaping the marauders. Herein a couple has to leave their infant daughter behind whose wail could jeopardise their lives. Similarly 'Heera Mirg'[24] (The Antelope) by Mohinder Singh Sarna (1926–) describes how all hell broke loose upon a village with innocent inhabitants losing their lives just to provide to the murderous beasts.

No less harrowing was the sexual violation of women, committed with impunity. In terms of their voracity, the rapists in these stories do not match their counterparts in Saadat Hasan Manto's stories.[25] Likewise, the affliction the victims are shown undergoing, does not desensitise them completely, desecrated though they feel in the long run. A typical example is provided by Kartar Singh Duggal's 'Kulsum'[26] (Kulsum) in which an old man, supposedly a village *maulana*, shuts a young girl in his dark house to offer her as a gift to the young schoolmaster. Tall, well-built and fair as she is, the schoolmaster tries to have sex with her forcibly, even by grabbing her arm and pulling her towards the

bed. The young girl resists his advances first meekly and then strongly, almost like a lioness. She is willing to have conjugal union but only after marrying him. Thus, she pleads with all the earnestness at her command, knowing that a virgin is not thus supposed to pray for marriage. Grossly insensitive to her largely conventional, but at the same time solemn feelings, he gets offended and walks out of the room in disgust. Taking umbrage over her alleged arrogance, the old man goes in and rapes her. The schoolmaster enters the room again, this time to find her in a dishevelled state with all her discretion vanished into thin air.

After this harrowing incident, the girl feels utterly supine. For the interlocutor in 'Sarhde Jakhm' (Putrefying Wounds) by Jaswant Singh Kanwal (1919–) such a trauma has different meanings. She realises that to be thus violated is writ large in the fate of womankind in general. A look at other ill-fated women kept in a brothel like her, leads her to construe.

> The wolf of lust holds us in his grip. We are his diet, it is up to him to devour us to the extent he likes. This is not the first time that man has oppressed woman. He has been hurting, oppressing and violating her from centuries. No matter though she is Muslim, Hindu or Sikh, no religion has succeeded in extinguishing the fire of lust meant to consume her.[27]

For all this realisation, she is unable, perhaps unwilling as well, to retrieve herself. So the story, in the form of a letter to her female friend, ends with a religious salutation that she underlines is from a heretic.

II

The primary leitmotif of fear, estrangement, ravishment and rape is held in counterpoint by the secondary motif of a new horizon of hope and zone of experience played upon in several other stories. The first to come to mind is Kartar Singh Duggal's 'Pakistan Hamara Hai' (Pakistan is Ours). This is the story of a young Hindu girl who, to escape the turmoil, seeks shelter with a Muslim family. Otherwise a desperado, the young man of the family falls in love with this girl and gets married to her. So powerful is the marital bond between them that she refuses point blank to go to India when the army comes on a rescue operation. Her forthright reply to them is 'I won't go, I shall not ever go. These

trees are ours and so are their leaves. This plant that I have been watering is yet to grow'.[28]

In this plea is latent the effort to undo partition through invoking the marital bond and natal home that reclaims the natural ambience for its support. Though a source of sustenance to the man and woman concerned, it cannot undo the political decision arrived at by politicians with wider motives. In Kulwant Singh Virk's short story 'Khabbal' (Perennial Grass) renewed kinship is visualised as the means to face, if not undo, the disastrous consequences which partition has brought in its trail. It concerns a young married woman from a Sikh family abducted by a Muslim and kept in a dilapidated house in a village difficult to reach for an ordinary person. The recovery officer, himself Sikh, goes there against all odds so as to rescue her for her sake if not for that of her community and country. The miserable condition in which he finds the woman almost bewilders him:

> In that house made of brick and mud, the abducted wife of another man lay helplessly before me on a cot. I could not think of an uglier image of man's inhumanity to man. Abducted, raped and humiliated, she lay quietly and still. There was not one from her caste, community, religion or village with her. No one had told her that she could once again be with the people who were dear to her. Perhaps if some one had told her, she would have refused to believe him. Afterall, how could any one rescue her from such a big and strong country like Pakistan? It was foolish even to dream of such an attempt.[29]

When the recovery officer tells her that he would come to rescue her after a few days, she pleads for quite a different sort of favour. Her plea to him is to put her in touch with her sister-in-law, abducted by persons of the nearby village. She wants that young girl, brought up like a daughter, to be with her. Then she can find a good match for her and forge kinship to sustain her through life.

In Sant Singh Sekhon's two stories, historical memory and cultural heritage are sought to be invoked for re-experience. In his story 'Jitt te Haar' (Victory and Defeat) the central character Mehardin, who is the chief of a Muslim village surrounded by Sikh population, finds no heresy in persuading his brethren to convert to Sikhism. What disposes him to do so is not the fear of the turmoil raging around at that moment of time. It is, rather, the retrospective feeling that their ancestors had done something wrong by reneging their cultural patrimony several

centuries back, which now strengthens his disposition in this direction. Added to it is his prospective fear that in the absence of any kinship and cultural alignment they, as Mohajirs, will not feel at home in Pakistan, the terrain of which is likely to be alien and not just in the geographical sense. Further strengthening his resolution is the example of Malerkotla where Muslims and Sikhs lived peacefully, if not amicably as well, even during dark days when ravages, killings and abductions went on in other areas. This was in gratitude to an earlier ruler of the state who, in the court of the subedar of Sirhind, had raised his voice against the martyrdom of the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh. How Mehardin's mind, racked by conflicting feelings, arrived at this resolve is conveyed through the following intricate sentence:

> In those days, swayed by mixed feelings Mehardin the village chief thought of the varying historical stages within his heart of hearts to decide that it will be the undoing of a historic wrong if he can persuade his brethren to convert to Sikhism and repair the rupture since then undergone with the neighbouring Sikh nationality.[30]

His brethren readily agree to his suggestion and their interface with Sikhs begins to grow fast. Intermarriages take place, lending credence to the hope that the area between Delhi and Amritsar will acquire a new cultural configuration, further to take West Punjab under its ambience. This is the best illustration of a society taking history into its own hands not only to defeat the divisive tactics of the polity but also to organise a better future. However, the defeat of the polity is not on the cards yet. So the governments of India and Pakistan arrive at an agreement to repatriate Muslim women from East Punjab, and Hindu and Sikh women from West Punjab. Mehardin's own daughter Zeenat, who married a Sikh, is also repatriated. However, her husband, like the legendary Ranjha assuming several subterfuges to recover his Heer, also reaches Pakistan and settles there with her. Thereafter, their life passes peacefully and they occasionally visit East Punjab to see their relatives. They are happy that their marital bond is secure. But how Mehardin's dream of a cultural configuration fails to become national –popular does not appear to bother them at all.

In another story, 'Amanat'[31] (Trust), the same issue figures only to meet with a similar denouement. In this story, there is a Muslim girl who, when her family is getting ready to migrate, slips away and seeks shelter with a Sikh boy for whom she professes fondness. They then

get married but not much time passes before she has to undergo repatriation. Delivered to her family in Pakistan, she is married off to a collateral who, for her beauty's sake, accepts her though she is pregnant from her first husband. A son is born to her and to entrust him to his rightful father, she comes to East Punjab under the pretext of visiting relatives in Malerkotla. She meets her former husband who has so far kept his vow not to marry again and is gratified to get his son. As a token of gratitude and identification, he registers a legal deed to transfer his land to his son. The story ends with his tearful farewell to the woman who was earlier his wife and then the mother of his son, the rightful heir of his property.

The denouement of both stories rests on declension as they do not fully take into their fold the cultural problematics that impelled the characters to take recourse to exceptional thinking and feeling. The egoistic passional content which has animated their unconscious does not completely translate into political consciousness and ethical conscience. As a result, the agenda that the good sense of these writers has projected for national–popular unification of the Punjabi people, figures as evanescent. Their effort to forge unity through marital bonds from below does not modify the animosity that power-conflict has hardened from above. The inter-religious marriage, evoking sacrifice and sanctity, does not become the institutional basis for a civic society hearkening to a renewed horizon of hope and alternative experience. This detracts from the texture of these stories and the failure of the writers to infuse them with richness seems portentous for the Punjabi imagination, as partition proved for the region. Hence Walter Benjamin's prescient observation is so pertinent: 'Every image of the past that is not recognised by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.'[32]

Partition must come to the centre of literary imagination in the east as well as the west of the erstwhile Punjab. Whether Punjabi writers will accept the challenge to revert the slippage of this irretrievable disappearance into an irrevocable reality, is a question to which as yet there is no answer.

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extending it, I have incorporated whatever was found essential in the points raised during the discussion and the suggestions made earlier.

Notes

1. For further discussion on this point, see Tejwant Singh Gill, *Region/Country Configuration in Punjabi Literature* (Ludhiana: Echo Publishers, 1995).
2. *Millions on the Move* (New Delhi: Govt. of India Publication, 1953, p. 10). Hints to the effect are available in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Fund, 1988), IInd series, vols 6,7. In vol. 6, p. 94, 3 lakh persons put up in Kurukshetra camp alone are mentioned. There were several such camps in other cities as well. The persons encamped at these places were those who did not leave land behind. Those who had land were several times this number. Rather than put up in camps they had settled in villages. In vol. 7, p. 1, reference is made to 12 lakh having migrated from Sindh alone.
3. In ibid., vol. 4, p. 78, Nehru refers to Ghazanfar Ali Khan's report that 1 lakh persons were killed in East Punjab alone. According to him the casualties were higher in West Punjab.
4. To add to their humiliation, abducted women were rapatriated without eliciting their consent. In ibid., vol. 5, p. 120, Nehru is constrained to note that a great majority of them were so frightened of being taken away forcibly that they threatened to commit suicide.
5. I draw this distinction between commonsense and good sense from Antonio Gramsci who in his *Selections from Prison Note Books* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993, 323, 324, 419, 420) reflected a lot over their cognitive aspects. In his *Bani*, Guru Nanak sought to distinguish *Dur-matt* (mundane sense) from *Utam-matt* (sublime sense). With intuitive feeling of this distinction imbibed from the founder of the Sikh religion, I have elaborated it under Gramsci's theoretical influence. For further details, see Tejwant Singh Gill, 'Sikhism in the 21st Century: Challenges and Responses', written for presentation at the Second Conclave in Washington, 9–10 November 1996.
6. Novels to which reference may be made are Nanak Singh's *Khoon de Sohle* (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1966), *Agg di Khed* (Amritsar: Nanak Singh Pustakmala, 1972), *Manjdhar* (Amritsar: Nanak Singh Pustakmala, 1968) and *Chitrakar* (Amritsar: Nanak Singh Pustakmala, 1972); Sohan Singh Seetal's *Tootan Wala Khoo* (Chandigarh: Punjab School Board, n.d.) and *Yug Badal Gia* (Ludhiana: G.S. Printers, 1972); Surinder Singh Narula's *Din te Duniya* (Ludhiana: Lahore Book Shop, 1957); and Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (Ludhiana: Lahore Book Shop, 1970).
7. I owe this awareness of the novel to Walter Benjamin who, in his *Illuminations* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), distinguished it so profoundly from the story.
8. There are only two notable plays, Kartar Singh Duggal's *Mitha Paani* (Delhi: Munshi Gulab Singh & Sons, n.d.) and Kapur Singh Ghuman's *Jeondi Laash* (Jalandhar: New Book Company, 1978).
9. Many poets including Mohan Singh, Santokh Singh Dhir, Surjit Rampuri and several others poured out their anguish in poems published in journals. Credit for notable compositions on the partition in the poetic mode goes only to Amrita Pritam for *Main*

Twarikh haan Hind di (I am India's History) and Dr Haribhajan Singh for *Lasan* (Amritsar: Navchetan Press, 1955). Earlier published as a booklet, Amrita Pritam's poem was included in her *Chonvi Kavita* (Selected Poetry) (Delhi: Sikh Publishing House, 1952).

10. Pritam, *Meri Chonvi Kavita*, 105–106.
11. Haribhajan Singh, *Lasan*, pp. 26–27.
12. Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Note Books*, p. 366.
13. Devendra Satyarthi, 'Janam Bhoomi' (Native Land), in *Lanka Desh hai Colombo* (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1991), 98–112.
14. Gurbachan Bhullar, 'Phatu Marasi', in *Janni Jaane taan* (Delhi: Arsee Publishers, 1986), 23–32, 155.
15. Sukhwant Kaur Mann, 'Chattu', in Jaswant Deed (ed.), *Desh Vand dian Kahanian* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1995), pp. 78–97.
16. See, for example, U. Kaura, *Muslims and Indian Nationalism* (New Delhi: South Asia Books, 1977); S. Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); and A.I. Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987). The conclusion, that Asim Roy draws in 'The High Politics of India's Partition', *Modern Asian Studies* 24, 2 (1990), 385–415, is that 'the Indian component of this historiographical orthodoxy has been content to project partition as the tragic finale of a heroic struggle of the Indian patriots against the sinister Machiavellian forces out to destroy the sacred unity of India'.
17. As represented by Ayesha Jalal's *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), the revisionist historiography has gone much beyond rhetoric. Subscribing to the xenophobia and schizophrenia marking the Muslim and Hindu communities, though unconsciously, shows partiality for Jinnah. Distancing herself from Ayesha Jalal, Farzana Shaikh (*Community and Consensus in Islam: Muslim Representation in Colonial India, 1860–1947* (Cambridge: University Press, 1989) shows herself as the representative of a third historiographical trend. Its inkling may be there but the third trend encompassing the political and civic society's explosive tension and cultural consensus is yet to flourish. For that the study of literary practice at the juncture can be most rewarding.
18. Balwant Gargi, 'Bhua Fatima', in Deed, *Desh Vand dian Kahanian*, 212–19, 215.
19. Kulwant Singh Virk, 'Ulahna', in *Merian Shareshi Kahanian* (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1980), 80.
20. Sujan Singh, 'Manukh te Pashu', in *Saare Patte* (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1990), 445–56.
21. Surinder Singh Narula, 'Chhamo di Baithik', in *Narula Pachisi* (Ludhiana: Central Publishers, 1982), 113–25.
22. Sant Singh Sekhon, 'Bhootan di Khed', in *Sekhon dian Kahanian* (Jalandhar: Central Publishers, 1966), 181–87.
23. Gurbax Singh Preetlari, 'Mubina ke Sukina', in *Meri Gulbadan* (Amritsar: Kasturi Lal and Sons, 1977), 78–91.
24. Mohinder Singh Sarna, 'Heera Mirg', in Deed, *Desh Vand dian Kahanian*, 198–205.

25. For further discussion of the point, see Tejwant Singh Gill, 'The 1947 Partition: Manto and Punjabi Short-story Writers', paper presented at a seminar on *The Life and Works of Saadat Hasan Manto* held in the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, 21–23 May 1996. The proceedings of the seminar are being published in English, Urdu and Hindi.
26. Kartar Singh Duggal, 'Kulsum', in *Ik Chhitt Chanan di* (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1972), 48–53. Its English translation is available in Alok Bhalla (ed.), *Stories about the Partition of India* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 1994), vol. 3, 91–95.
27. Jaswant Singh Kanwal, 'Sarhde Jakham', in Deed, *Desh Vand Dian Kahanian*, 151–60.
28. Kartar Singh Duggal, 'Pakistan Hamara Hai', in *Dungur* (Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1971), 130–36.
29. Kulwant Singh Virk, 'Khabbal', in *Merian Shareshi Kahanian*. Its English translation is available in Bhalla, *Stories about the Partition of India*, vol. 1, 204–209, 207.
30. Sant Singh Sekhon, 'Jitt te Haar', in *Sianpan* (Ludhiana: Lahore Book Shop, 1982), 95–102, 96. This collection carries a preface written by me.
31. Sant Singh Sekhon, 'Amanat', in *Sianpan*, 121–33.
32. Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 257.

Partition and Diaspora: Memories and Identities of Punjabi Hindus in London

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Since the partition of the Indian subcontinent, being or speaking Punjabi has been increasingly defined in terms of Sikhism. This ascription can be attributed to the historical fluctuating geopolitics of the Punjab and consequent shifts in language affiliation. Post-partition Hindu migrants to the UK tend to turn away from being identified as Punjabi in contrast to their UK-born children who have embraced their 'Punjabi' identity as a specific response to being in Britain. This article seeks to respond to the question 'what is Punjabi about London's Punjabi Hindus?' It explores their identity by assessing the importance of partition in the narratives of both migrants and their children. The joint themes of memory (of 1947 and refugee status) and identity (both as Punjabis and as an ethnic minority in the UK) are central aspects of understanding the Punjabi Hindu experience in Britain. This article is organised into six separate sections. The first briefly outlines the ideas of memory and identity. The next section gives some background to the historical particulars of the Punjab. Subsequently, I review and analyse everyday moments of people's memories of partition, namely, moments of reference and moments of silence. The following section exposes everyday understandings which allow Punjabi to be constructed as an exclusively Sikh identity. The fifth section highlights divisions of language and religion as related to post-partition understandings of the role of Hindi for Hindus. I then explore the implications of these memories of fragmentation (of partition and language) for the British-born or British-raised generation.[1]

Partition, arguably an event more important than Independence itself, is a topic which has been 'under-researched and neglected by the social scientists of South Asia'.[2] Deliberating the possible causes and political motivations which divided British India, previous research on partition focuses on historical and political factors leading up to, and on the

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aftermath of, the 1947 division.[3] 'The political decision to partition the subcontinent into two sovereign states resulted eventually in the largest transfer of population known to history. Nearly a million people perished, and over 13 million crossed the borders. Over 4 million refugees from West Pakistan crossed into the Punjab'.[4] It has been claimed that 'when we start looking for social histories, or for accounts that try to piece together the fractured reality of the time and of the event itself from a non-official perspective, a perspective from the margins, as it were, we encounter a curious void'.[5] Recently, however, researchers have become increasingly interested in filling this void and accounting for the voices and experiences of partition.[6] This fascination may relate, as Susie Tharu suggests, to an interest in 'parallel moments',[7] connecting partition with recent episodes of communal violence and rioting sparked by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) activism.[8] Or it may reflect a sense that now, almost 50 years after the event, it is possible to look upon this deeply divisive experience with a steady eye. Experiences of people who became refugees during partition are now surfacing, but what of those who were very young at the time of partition, or those who were born to refugee families after relocation in India? What of their children? How important is partition to these generations who have little or no first-hand experience of the historical event?

This article seeks to fill this void in partition writing by drawing upon the articulated moments when the past became the present for Hindu Punjabis in Britain. Anthropological fieldwork for this research took place between August 1995 and October 1996, and focused on middle-class Hindu Punjabi families of London. The adults, more specifically, the parental generation, began to arrive in the 1950s and continued to stream into the UK until the early 1970s (most arriving in the period between 1956 and 1963). They were, for the most part, direct migrants from India—a few from Punjab, but most from Delhi. A few of the migrants also arrived via a short stay in East Africa. Most of the parental generation (that is, migrants to Britain) are from refugee families; they were either born in West Punjab but were very young at the time of partition (between the ages of 1 and perhaps as old as 7) or had been born in India after 1947 (perhaps having older siblings born in what became Pakistan). There were a few, though, who were young adults of 18 or 20 at the time of partition.[9] Many of these parents are now approaching retirement, and their children are in their early twenties to thirties. Their children are pursuing post-secondary education, or

working in some professional or white-collar capacity. The children, like many of these migrants, have no direct experience of partition as a historical event.

However, listening to these relatively affluent and well-educated migrants, it became clear that for the parents, and for their children too, partition was a framing historical moment.[10] For example, one spring afternoon in central London, I met a young 30-year-old Hindu Punjabi[11] man for an interview. As we walked to a café to begin the interview, he asked me to explain my research. I described my reasons for studying Hindu Punjabis, namely the lack of research on this minority in Britain.[12] I deliberately kept my reasons brief so as to avoid feeding the interview and skewing his responses with my ideas. It must be noted that I did not mention Pakistan, but I did mention migrations and changes in India which produced migrants. He began speaking of Lahore and its former glory as a great and fashionable place. He also elaborated with details on his family's history in Lahore especially regarding their prosperity; for example, he spoke about his great-grandfather owning a foreign car in 1920s Lahore. This young man had never seen Lahore, his parents were very young when they left Pakistan, yet his description of what was once called the Paris of the East was vivid and spontaneous. How had 1920s Lahore come to present-day London?

Memory and Identity Framework[13]

Recent scholarship in anthropology and cultural studies has deliberated the conception, construction, and negotiation of identity in the context of an increasingly mobile and culturally fluid world.[14] While theoretically tantalising, the details of how identity is negotiated are not addressed. Notions of negotiating and shifting identity might benefit from exploring collective memory as a key facet of identity. Rethinking Halbwachs'[15] notion of collective memory and merging it with Paul Connerton's[16] ideas of social memory as instantiated in bodily practice allows an exploration of memory as making identity, and therefore as a site of negotiation. How and why are past moments incorporated into the present? How is a historical event articulated specifically first as a memory of loss and then as a means of collective identification? What are the different ways of remembering?

Oral historians focus upon stories people tell about the past, their reworking and revision of a known official history. Thus for Samuel

and Thompson, memory, as learnt through life histories, is akin to myth and provides a 'non-official' perspective of history.

> Like myth, memory requires a radical simplification of its subject matter. All recollections are told from a standpoint in the present. In telling, they need to make sense of the past. That demands a selecting, ordering, and simplifying, a construction of coherent narrative whose logic works to draw the life story towards the fable.[17]

The quotation reveals that oral historians begin by asking people to speak about 'the past', eliciting narratives and memories and thus constructing an 'oral history' for their interpretation. However, as an anthropologist, I never solicited anyone's thoughts on partition. Moreover, no one ever offered me a formal account. Yet repeated fragments of the past, the specific past of partition, came into the context of the present during my fieldwork, too many to ignore. Partition was entangled and interwoven into everyday speech and stories of ordinary events; these were not neat and tidy narratives of reminiscences. The transmission was informal, unintentional, and only momentarily elucidated; narrative, in fact, is an inadequate term for this phenomenon. These were not stories, myths, or fables of the past, but moments when the past was evoked, expressed, mentioned, forgotten and remembered. Subtly evoked, these interpretations of partition can be seen not merely as individual experiences but as part of collectively understood processes. This memory is very closely tied to identity, who we are and what we have become. What are the memories of Hindu Punjabis? What are the metaphors that inform their lives? What are the narratives that they tell themselves about themselves?

The Official History—the Punjab of Textbooks[18]

Recounting a history of Punjab begins with contestations and questions: whose Punjab? How defined? In which period? There is no better place to begin my task than to give meaning to the word itself: Punjab. *Punj* translates as five and *ab* as rivers; Punjab therefore means the land of the five rivers.[19] Ibbetson's 1881 Census of India indicates the general understanding of the pre-partition, pre-Independence Punjab extending from Delhi to beyond the Khyber pass. After the British arrived, for administrative purposes the Punjab region also included 34 native states which, after 1947, joined India. The present-day Punjab in India is

actually only *Doab* (two rivers), the remaining three rivers having been awarded to Pakistan in 1947.

Depending on one's perspective, Punjab was connected/annexed/incorporated/subordinated by Great Britain in 1849. It was a late addition to the colonial landscape and the time of its inclusion was short, but sweet. Punjab was (and still is) regarded by some migrants, and indeed those governing the former colonies, as an 'administrative dream for the British'.[20] If India was the jewel in the Crown, Punjab was the Kohinoor diamond by being a successful laboratory of the great colonial experiment. Almost one hundred years after the British arrived, the Indian Independence Act of 1947 divided Punjab into the East Punjab province of the Union of India and the West Punjab province of Pakistan. The dividing line of partition followed the course of two rivers, allotting parts of Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Multan divisions to Pakistan and the remainder of the region to India. In 1966 East Punjab was further divided into the Punjabi-speaking Punjab state and the Hindi-speaking Haryana state. The demands of such divisions have to this day rendered Punjab a balkanised version of its former self.

This, however, is to describe Punjab in terms of historical political demands and changing borders. It is not exactly this Punjab which is of concern here. The Punjab most relevant to this article is the Punjab of memory, of home and of experienced space. Thus when London's Hindu Punjabis speak of Punjab they may be referring to: (*a*) the pre-colonial Punjab (everything north of Delhi into the Himalayas); (*b*) the colonial administrative Punjab with clean lines and marked districts; (*c*) East and West Punjab of pre-partition days; (*d*) the divided post-partition Punjab; or (*e*) the current-day Punjab minus Haryana. These historical splits, especially partition, have become a collective memory of fracturing, spawning a specifically Hindu Punjabi identity.

Memories of Partition in Everyday London—Referents and Silence

I want to begin this section of the account of people's reflections with a transcription of an interview which I held with a Hindu Punjabi migrant who had been in England since 1965. At first he had worked in a factory in the East End of London, and then saved up enough money to buy a small corner shop. He had three children: his eldest son was a doctor, his daughter was a pharmacist and his youngest son reading law at Cambridge. As we spoke, this son phoned and asked his father

for some extra money. His father's response was, 'Just tell me how much you need, I will transfer it tomorrow'. Before the phone rang I had asked him where he came from, and he had replied 'Delhi', afterwards, he added: 'I must tell you though I am from nowhere.'

Q: Uncle,[21] you are from nowhere?

A: Same as you, your father comes from Bannu, then Delhi, then you're in Cambridge then you will be somewhere else, so?

Q: So Uncle that means we are nowhere people?

A: Yes, our family was first in Punjab, then we went to Bihar, then we came here.... We were in West Pakistan, in Rawalpindhi. Then we were in East Ham, now we are in Leyton so how many places you want to remember? For what?

Q: You have to know it, no?

A: For just the knowing sake. Isn't it?

Q: Then Uncle, how do you answer that question—where are you from? And it is an obsession with our people to ask 'where are you from?' or 'What side do you come from?' How do you answer that?

A: So I am from nowhere, because connections are just like footsteps, you move your foot and erasing the previous mark. The step is gone.

Q: So what about your children then, are they from nowhere?

A: They are from here, they don't know any place or any name [in India], isn't it? They do not want to remember. Sometimes we say 'oh your that b"u"a [father's sister] or your that relation' they don't want to know. It is the practice of what you do, if you meet people then you know them if you don't meet them for a number of years then you don't know them [referring to relatives in India].

Some guests arrived and, as there was only one front entry, they passed through his corner shop to enter into his home. After welcoming them in, he paused for a while, looked at me, and then enigmatically added: 'There is nothing in story—these are realities.'

Stories, realities, narratives, myths, experiences and imagined communities are some of the tools available to social scientists for understanding people's experiences, the so-called metaphors that we are made of. Uncle ended the interview by insisting not on metaphors but 'realities'. I want to explore these realities of memory and the metaphors in which they are entangled. Those memories lost over the generations and those perceived as necessary to remember become part of a collective

consciousness, more of a diffused feeling, not concrete, but repeatedly stated, assumed, or informing one's thoughts and actions.

Partition is remembered and recounted or forgotten and hidden (but then emerges in a specific manner which I recount below). I shall review some of these moments, the casual rememberings, the phrases and the thoughts that made partition a beginning point, and an anchor, for many people's life stories.[22] The past of partition is resurrected and imported to Britain via visits by the elder grandparent generation. While on extended visits from India, grandparents inevitably tell stories full of nostalgia, the days of their youth, the idyllic setting in which they were raised and the wealth to which they had been accustomed. Their children, the migrants to Britain, grew up in India with these stories in the aftermath of the refugee experience. I want to explore specifically how these migrants (i.e., the parental generation) refer to partition, how each moment of remembering imparts a certain meaning, a certain memory. Occasionally it was as simple as just adding on the date for clarification and emphasis, 'Partition, you know, 1947' and indeed many referred to partition only by its date. In this reference the chronological aspect of a historical event is emphasised.

Other modes of reference, however, prove more revealing than simply the date itself. For example, communal violence was another example of a certain manner of remembering. Muhammad Umar Memon in his study of Intizar Husain's writings reveals that the Pakistan's Progressive Writers Movement

> viewed the partition as totally negative and failed to appreciate it within a historical context. Devoid of any deeper historical understanding, this writing focused narrowly on an offshoot of the partition, namely, the communal riots, leaving the influences that necessitated it virtually untouched. The literature produced on the theme of communal riots appears to be generally tentative and superficial.[23]

The extreme violence is also emphasised in historical accounts such as the 1989 reprint of *Stern Reckoning* (Gopal Das Khosla's account of the 1948 Government of India Fact Finding Mission)[24] which is filled with tales of atrocities—looting, rape, killing, abduction, arson, and self-immolation—unfortunately common to many refugee experiences. But now, almost 50 years after these events, people no longer emphasise the violence, it is simply assumed. Thus unlike literary or historical accounts where violence is the starting point, Hindu Punjabis amongst

whom I did my research do not focus on the violence. Rather, violence is mentioned as a peripheral point of reference, something taken for granted as part of the experience: '*jadon katarn"ak hua*' (when the slaughtering occurred). Violence has become part of the collective memory of the experience. It is an additional referent for the event apart from the date.

The most telling references, rather than violence, are those of loss and dislocation. Menon and Bhasin researching the abduction of women, state:

> [I]n their recall, the predominant memory is of confusion, dislocation and a severing of roots as they were forced to reckon with the twin aspects of 'azadi'—bewildering loss: of place and property, no doubt, but more significantly, of community, of a network of more or less stable relationships, and of a coherent identity.[25]

The bewildering sense of loss on all accounts is not restricted to the abducted woman (although no doubt experienced by her in a very specific way), but defines the refugee experience generally. For migrants to Britain the assumption of the tale of dislocation was commonly found in other terms of reference. For example, instead of using the word 'partition' itself, or recalling the date, people refer to it in other revealing ways such as: '*when we became shamārthi*' (refugees) or '*sanūn jadon bāhar nikāl dīā*' (when we were *put out*), and most telling, '*jadon asi ghar chorke India āgae si*' (when we *left* our *homes* and came to *India*). This last phrase particularly emphasises that in those days British India included West Punjab and that the areas outside of the Punjab in British India were referred to as *Hindustan* (land of the Hindus) and, most importantly, it was not considered *home*.[26]

Uncle's claim that 'I am from nowhere' and that 'connections are just like footsteps, you move your foot and erasing the previous mark', attests to the power of the decision to forget, to erase history or memory as a basis for identity. Samuel and Thompson, referring to Freud, assert that 'memory is inherently revisionist, an exercise in selective amnesia. What is forgotten may be as important as what is remembered'.[27] Perhaps the most alarming consequence of the silence surrounding partition is the assumption pertaining to Punjabi identity, especially religious identities. Addressing this sensitive topic runs the risk of reifying dynamic processes and denying the many inter-religious Punjabi friendships which I did witness. The risk of discussing religious differences lies in creating

an impression of irreconcilable differences; however, the silence of these divisions perpetuates harmful assumptions, unquestionable and undebatable, which occlude the complexity of Punjabi identity in the past and permit clear oppositions in the present.[28] Thus this silence must be uncovered.[29]

One evening I was sitting with my husband in the front room of a family I met through my Punjabi teacher. After the initial introductions, the man asked my husband the oft-repeated question: 'Where is your family from in India?' My husband, whose family originates in Deri Ghazi Khan (now in Pakistan), began to outline his history. Our host told us that he had been born in Pakistan just before partition, but that his passport read that he had been born in Hoshairpur (Punjab, India), which was where his family first settled as refugees. To make sure that there were no further problems, when he, as he put it, 'had his passport made' before migrating to England, he claimed India, specifically Hoshairpur, as his place of birth. An altered passport birthplace was not uncommon or even interesting in itself, although I had mostly heard of changed birthdates—it was a common strategy of the time. However, the only striking aspect of his revelation was the look on his daughter's face. She was about 14 years old and had obviously only at this moment discovered her father was originally from Pakistan. At that moment her parents had become exactly that which she had sought to distance herself from in school, and perhaps even at home: she realised she could be called Paki.[30]

This silence and act of forgetting has serious consequences. In some families it leads to defining Muslims as the *other*, sometimes as despised and hated *others* with whom nothing was shared. At specific moments, these fellow Punjabis become Pakistanis or Muslims, and their shared *Punjabiness* is downplayed. Thus in these instances memory is not just about orality, but about actual body practice. I remember on one occasion having bought a box of Indian sweets for a family we were visiting. They accepted the sweets, but then later remarked on the packaging, 'You know you should not go to that shop, it is owned by Muslims, it is a dirty shop.' When we protested that the shop was, in fact, very clean, they replied, 'No, the back of the shop is dirty, the kitchen, they even have mice.' The underlying tension and constant referral to difference was revealed in other ways as well. As one woman said, on another occasion, when buying groceries for an event she was sponsoring at the local temple, 'Oh if I would have known that it was a Muslim shop then I wouldn't have bought the food for the temple there. I mean

I don't mind but because it is temple food. Oh well it is done now.' The subtleties were played out in terms of purity and pollution, of meats eating and sanctity. But while this woman was a vegetarian from birth, the other couple who suspected mice had eaten meat until recently (it has been five years since they became vegetarian).

The parents' subtle and sometimes direct disdain for Muslims was keenly felt by some of the British-born generation. One young man told me about his cousin's surreptitious marriage to her Muslim boyfriend which had

> shocked the whole family. . . . My dad will not let Muslims into our house. . . . You have met my girlfriend's dad, but you have not met my dad, they are very different people in many ways but there is one thing that they share, right, they are both anti-Muslim. It's in every Asian. I live and let live, but I do not trust them at all. I've seen in it on both sides, young or old. You see my friend from work, Nasir, I owe him a lot, you know I don't consider it as a Muslim thing. It has to do with trusting each other and being fatalistic, like the Irish and the British.

Accounting for the current state of tension between Hindu and Muslim youth is obviously a complex matter, and contemporary factors need to be considered alongside those factors originating with the migrants. But a sense of difference is constructed in the home. Partition has thus become a moment of reference when the migrant generation recalls life in West Punjab. Their homes, childhood impressions, would be remembered sometimes when speaking about something else entirely. For example, at a dinner party one woman said: 'Yes that was what it was like in Kohat, now in Pakistan.' But when I asked her when she left Punjab, she said when she was two years old. These moments of remembering when the past becomes the present for migrants or for their parents, are an intrinsic aspect of being a British-born Hindu Punjabi. The memories passed to the British-born generation revolve around themes of past dislocation, overcoming refugee experiences and of being permanently separated from an ancestral homeland (and by this I mean the part of Punjab lost to Pakistan, the Punjab to which they can never return). These are all manifest, moreover, through an emphasis on a lost *golden age*.

Punjabi=Sikh

The effect of partition in recarving and reshaping Punjab's boundaries and the further change in state borders due to language (the creation of Hindi-speaking Haryana) are important in considering how memory and identity combine to illuminate that which is Punjabi about Hindu Punjabis in Britain. This section examines the subtle changes which have increasingly identified the ethnic adjective *Punjabi* with the religious affiliation *Sikh*. In 1947, Muslim Punjabis became Pakistanis and ruptured the Punjabi tripartite. Increasingly, their Muslimness as Pakistanis became primary, occluding their identity as *Punjabis* for Sikhs and Hindus alike. However, during the early migration years of the 1950s and 1960s Hindus and Sikhs in Britain enjoyed and assumed a fraternal Punjabi *Indian* identity.

Hindus and Sikhs shared sites of worship in London (during the mid-1960s when few Hindu temples existed many Hindus would frequent *gurdwaras*, such as the Hammersmith Gurdwara in West London). They continue to share overlapping, albeit restricted, patterns of marriage alliance (for example, the matrimonials section of local temple publications and newspapers such as *Eastern Eye* sometimes contain advertisements which state that both Sikhs and Hindus are sought as suitable potential partners).[31] Individuals share symbols and practices of body inscription (such as wearing a *karā*, a steel bangle,[32] and women keeping their hair long). They share friendships, visiting each other socially, sometimes using fictive kin ties. However, despite all this sharing, there is an increasing separation between Hindus and Sikhs in Britain. The naming of *selves*, the *self* of a distinctive group and of a specific language, is an arena where this separation is best illustrated.

The creation in 1966 of a majority Punjabi-speaking Punjab state within India did not eradicate demands for an independent Sikh state. The Khalistan movement for an independent Punjab is played on a global arena, pursuing both international recognition and the support of some members of the large international Sikh population. The struggle outside of India has been played in Britain, most recently with the death in 1995 of Tarseem Singh Purewal, liberal editor of the Southall-based publication, *Des Pardes*, supposedly killed by extremists for his views. More often the date '1984' is referred to as the turning point. It refers to the storming of the Golden Temple by the Indian army and the assassination of Indira Gandhi. It is stated without explanation, as if one should already appreciate the significance of the date. In evoking

this specific date and the tensions between Hindus and Sikhs in Britain, I risk referring back to South Asia as a source for understanding the experiences of migrants who had left 30 or 40 years previously. However, Hindus and Sikhs in Britain did not react to these events in terms of an issue exclusive to India. Those in Britain were reacting to the perceived threat in Britain, as well as expressing concern about relatives in India who would be directly affected by the riots and curfews in Punjab and Delhi. It was in 1984 that *Hindus* in Britain learned of the extent of tension within the Sikh community and how demands for Khalistan were tied to global Sikh experiences and monies. With this realisation came a hitherto unanticipated suspicion: Hindus did not belong in the Punjab. As Sikhs have sought to separate and distinguish themselves as a community, and because of the increasing identifications of Indian Punjab with Sikhs, Punjabi Hindus in Britain have been left in an oppositional role. The histories of language, religion and land which I have glossed over are entangled, and here the diasporic Punjabi Hindu migrant experience of the increasingly powerful identity of Punjab with Sikhs will be teased out. The increasing identity of Punjab with Sikhs is the second moment (although ongoing) of fracture for Hindu Punjabis.

There are two ways in which this Punjabi=Sikh forging became apparent to me during fieldwork: people's reflections and assumptions of difference between Hindus and Sikhs. The first generation reflects on the increasing separation of being Hindu from being Sikh and laments the loss of being Punjabi as the operative, prime identity. I was with a store owner (a small businessman) who went into this at great length. He began lamenting that in Britain there was no recognition of a shared Punjabi culture although Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims all had the same culture. 'In this country to be a Punjabi is to be a Sikh—not a Hindu, not Muslim.' He recounted, for example, the experience of a language professor at (a university) who was a Punjabi scholar but also a Hindu and had to fight for recognition because the Sikh community would not accept him as a Punjabi scholar. There were the Sikh teachers at a local Sunday school who would not buy Punjabi books from a non-Sikh. 'But we are all Punjabi—one identity. We all speak the same language and do the same things,' he told me. He asked, 'Didn't the women all keep long hair?' As if this alone made Punjabi culture, perhaps taken as a foundational aspect; culture as inscribed on the body. Perhaps he was saying that Sikhs had no hegemony over hair. I did not want to interrupt him; this was something he felt strongly about and he covered many different issues to make the same point: that Sikhs, Hindus and

Muslims were all the same. Shared language was the main example—Sikhs were trying to equate Punjabi with Sikh by ignoring that Muslim Punjabis sometimes spoke Punjabi yet wrote it with an Urdu script. While I shall return to the issue of language later, I want to first explore the experiences of children of migrants.

Negotiated Difference—Punjabi Minus Hindu

For many British-born Hindu Punjabis, being Sikh is entirely separate from being Hindu. As Hindus they may wear karas, they may have Sikh friends in their parents' generation, they may have Sikh friends themselves, but Sikhs and Hindus are distinct, and it is a distinction which is espoused without lament. This section explores the assumptions of difference between Sikhs and Hindus; a difference which the British-born generation feels it needs to explain. For example, one Sunday in the temple I began talking to a young woman whose family was sponsoring an event to mark the birth of a son (to her sister). She introduced me to her cousin, a young woman who was sitting beside her, 'This is my cousin Kiran, oh she is Sikh'. There was no apparent reason for this introduction marked by religious difference, I had not asked for her religion, nor had I inquired about her reasons for being at the temple, and I gave no indication of disdain or difference (incidentally, this 'cousin' did not have long hair and was not wearing a kara). This example provides one of many instances when acknowledgement of difference becomes necessary and conspicuous even when not explicitly sought. Why did this young woman feel that religious distinction needed to be highlighted?

There are other ways in which this religious difference is constantly being referred to and evoked; and always there is an assumption of difference. The simple game of naming reveals the assumption that Punjabi=Sikh. Repeatedly I would hear that when Punjabi Hindu students were asked, 'Are you Punjabi?', they would respond, 'No I am Hindu.' Conversely, when a group of active Hindu students who helped me find young people to interview led me to a young woman who had long hair and wore a kara, I suspected that she was Sikh. I explained my research, then finally just asked, 'Are you Hindu?' and she responded, 'No, I am *Punjabi*'. How has Punjabi become a gloss for Sikh for British-born Asians?

Language as Difference

The alignment of Sikh with Punjabi is tied to the boundaries of language use.[33] For example, when I began fieldwork, I took Punjabi lessons to brush up on my speaking abilities. It was through the reactions of others to this seemingly innocuous act that it became clear that Punjabi had become synonymous with Sikh. I met my teacher at a bus stop in Redbridge, she was a part-time translator for the Borough and was on her way to an appointment. Initially she spoke to me in Hindi and then switched when I responded in Punjabi. She had been a schoolteacher in India and since migration had informally taught Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu to children in Newham. She agreed to take me on for private tuition at her home. During the first lesson she asked why I wanted to learn Punjabi: '*Hindūa dī bāshā Hindī hotī hai, Punjābī Sikhān dī bāshā hai*' (The language of Hindus is Hindi, Punjabi language is for Sikhs).[34]

At our next meeting she asked me if my husband was a Sikh who did not wear a turban. When I asked her why she was asking, she recounted at first wondering if my husband wore a turban (i.e., was Sikh) and perhaps that being the reason I wanted to learn the language, but then, after meeting him in the temple and not seeing a turban or a kara, wondering if he was 'mona Sikh'.[35] When I responded that he was not Sikh, her attempts to get me to learn Hindi resumed. Repeatedly throughout our lessons she would tell me '*Punjabi sadī bāshā nī hai*' (Punjabi is not our language) or *Hindī kyon nī sikhdī* (why don't you learn Hindi?). She said that once I learned Hindi, I would find no need for Punjabi. Learning the language involved learning a script and as I was learning Punjabi she taught me to write it in Gurmukhi script.[36] A few times of her own accord she began to teach me Hindi, using Devanagri script. This attempt to subvert my Punjabi learning was quickly abandoned when she realised that I had begun to confuse the characters of the two scripts, and in fact was not progressing in either language.

My Punjabi teacher was not the only one with strong opinions about the language that I was learning. When I told friends and people I met during fieldwork about my attempts to learn Punjabi, I was told, 'You should learn Hindi, it is our language.' When I responded that I was learning Punjabi primarily to be able to speak it, the response was still that I should learn Hindi,with justifications of Hindi being the national language of India, and the language of communication for overseas Indians. If I said that I was already fluent in India's other national language, English, I was met with silence. Once I suggested to my

Punjabi teacher that she could herself teach all three languages (Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu) and was fluent in English, and that there was no harm in learning another language, but she still did not see the need for me to learn Punjabi and constantly tried to subvert the process.

By attempting to learn Punjabi I had unwittingly aligned myself to a long-standing language division which separated not only script from spoken language, but which was also tinged with religious identification. My Punjabi teacher was born in Lyallpur (now in Pakistan) and educated in Lahore. She was educated to be a teacher and knew, therefore, the significance of these language differences (she was raised in West Punjab and was twenty years old at the time of partition). She had grown up knowing that language choice was invested with many other subtle meanings which I did not know, but needed to learn; as inscribed practice, language was difference. She saw me as a Hindu who, as such, should be learning Hindi. If I learned Punjabi, especially the Gurmukhi script, it might be assumed that I was Sikh. Oblivious to the nuances between written and oral language skills, I approached my fieldwork with the idea that I needed to practice my Punjabi for research purposes. I soon learned that I had, through my choice of language tuition, unknowingly evoked a political–historical divide. I thought about discussing with her the deSaussureanian thesis about the arbitrary nature of signs, but knew that it would be meaningless—to learn Gurmukhi was a fixed sign.[37] By learning it, I was fixing myself and making a statement about religion, language, loyalties, and body practice.[38]

Central to understanding this language separation is the difference between the written and spoken language. Historically the high language of the Punjab, Urdu, was written in Persian script. English, the language of colonial overlords, was also both a written and spoken high language. Thus of the grandparent's generation, the men would be literate in Urdu and English, yet speak Punjabi, Urdu and English as well as a home dialect (such as Multani). Men were often proud that they could not read and write Hindi, that they were in fact only literate in Urdu and English. It was not until I started to gather my data and hear people reminiscing about language that I began to appreciate my Punjabi teacher's gentle admonitions about my choice of Punjabi. One uncle recounted that in Pakistan Sikhs would go to the gurdwara after school and learn Punjabi and Muslims would go to the mosque and learn Urdu and Persian by learning to read the Koran. He used to tag along with Muslims to the mosque. Although the Punjabi language was spoken by all, the languages in which one was literate depended upon religion

and social standing. Urdu and Hindi were languages taught at school—Gurmukhi was always associated with the gurdwara. Exceptionally, some women of that generation, such as my teacher in London, would have the same writing abilities as men. More usually women had limited writing abilities in Urdu (Persian script) but were proficient in written Hindi. Most women were comfortable with conversational Urdu, and fluent in oral Hindi and Punjabi. Moreover, some women had basic schooling in English. Of the parental generation (i.e., the migrant generation) men would speak Punjabi, Hindi, English and Urdu. Yet depending on age and if they were born before or after partition, and if born in West Punjab, East Punjab or Delhi, they would have differing oral and written skills in Urdu, Hindi and English, but would know only oral Punjabi.

Separation in terms of language was seen as an active choice or lamented as a strategy of survival, because when refugees moved from West Punjab into Hindustan (often Delhi), they were embarrassed about their seemingly parochial, rural accents which distinguished them as West Punjabi refugees. Some parents remember the conscious effort made to sanitise their Punjabi language and how it became a *home* language after partition because the Delhites would jest at their language abilities. The choice of Hindi by those who remained in India related very much to being Hindu, supporting the Indian nation and its official languages. Thus migrants, before leaving India, had already assumed language choices (of Hindi) and definitions of self in terms of the strategies of nation-building because of their refugee experience. Preference for Hindi and differentiation in spoken and written language along religious lines has become presupposed for the British-born generation.

An example of the diversity in languages in one home illustrates the changes in language over time. During Deepavali celebrations at one house, the Hindu prayers read by Uncle were written in Persian script, the same prayers were read by Aunty in Hindi script and their daughter (British-born) read part of the prayers, the *Hanuman Chalisa*, from a booklet which contained Hindi and Sanskrit and transliterated English. Thus even in one family, language abilities and proficiency in written script vary tremendously.

The issue of language choice was eloquently expressed in one man's reflections:

> The relationship of language for the Sikhs [lament over which language to speak in the diaspora] is actually one of Punjabi to English and so there's no medium in between. For the Hindu Punjabis I think it was exacerbated after Independence [because] there was a certain degree even before—'do they belong in Punjabi or do they belong in Hindi?' and that has had the effect accordingly.

Shifts rationalising language choice were clear for the migrant generation; they moved from Punjabi, to Hindi to English and had grown up, in the most part, with oral and written abilities in all three languages. The move towards identification with Hindi (which began pre-partition and was solidified after 1947) was revealed when people reflected that their relatives in India (again, usually in Delhi) did not speak Punjabi at all with their children, and the children of migrants (i.e., the British-born and -raised generation) remarked that their language skills in Punjabi are indeed better than those of their Indian cousins. But for Hindu Punjabi migrants to Britain, language is not so easily compartmentalised, and the move away from Punjabi into Hindi not easy to trace. Language choice is an ongoing struggle in Britain, but now it is defined by specific boundaries of identity where language use is synonymous with religious affiliation.

Language and the British-born Generation

Language, both oral and literate, provides further indication of absolute separation and difference. I knew some young Hindu Punjabis who were friends with Sikhs or Muslims and did not know that they all heard the same language in their parental home. For example, when I asked one young man (not a student but someone who had gone to college and was now working for his father's company) what language his parents spoke at home he responded, 'Hindi', adding that to him they spoke 'English', or a mixture. Later that evening when I met his parents, I asked them what language they spoke at home and they said, 'Punjabi'. When I sought clarification, they said that they rarely spoke Hindi as most of their friends were Punjabi. This instance is not simply one of a young man who did not know the difference between Hindi and Punjabi. At issue is not what language people speak, but which language they claim to be speaking, and the symbolic political meanings of the language. The young man was not alone. Many Hindu Punjabi young people increasingly claim that Hindi is spoken at home, or that

Hindi is their parents' mother tongue. At first, I thought that this was something exclusive to the children of migrants, in accordance with the fact that they are not speaking their parents' mother tongue (replete with concerns of language attrition in a community). But some of the migrant generation also claims Hindi, although certainly not in the same manner as the British-born generation. However, because of their parents' assumptions, they have been given *Hindi* as the language which should be studied, and *Punjabi* as the home language for which formal tuition is not encouraged. To be prophetic, Punjabi is a dying language for young Hindu Punjabis.[39]

Hindi is the claimed language of London's diasporic Hindu Punjabi community. An example of the assumption of Hindi is found in the fact that children are sent to study Hindi during evenings or weekends, or are taught by parents themselves.[40] After English, Hindi is the language to be learned. Informal learning of Hindi, it is usually claimed, occurs during regular doses of Bombay Hindi films which young people as children watched with their parents. They understand these films but usually cannot translate them.[41] There is no formal training in Punjabi. It is often picked up from hearing the parents speak or from hearing it at social gatherings. Often the most intensive periods of language learning occur during periods of immersion, for example, when children visit India and have to communicate with their grandparents. But even then, the grandfathers of many of them speak and read English, and make an effort to speak Hindi or Punjabi only for the benefit of their grandchildren. These moments of immersion are not regular and not sustained (five-to eight-year gaps in between visits to India were not uncommon).

For the British Hindu Punjabis, there is a *home* Punjabi, a language which they understand and speak with their parents and their parents' friends. Home Punjabi consists mainly of parents speaking to children about domestic matters, usually helping with the housework. While the children's understandings may be proficient, oral home Punjabi is very basic, most often consisting of phrases of greetings, or responses to usual questions (such as 'How are you?', 'How is school?'). Moreover, code-switching is normal and conversations, even a single sentence, change between English and Punjabi. Among those more comfortable with the language, some of the young people speak basic Punjabi with each other. For example, friends phoned by Punjabi friends would follow 'Hello', when answering their mobile phones, with '*O yār kidhān*' (Oh

friend, how are you?). Such code-switching was common, occasionally providing a comic base and lightheartedness to their exchanges.

During one interview a friend reflected on the use of Hindi and Punjabi in England and in India, and the changes in England in the use of Punjabi since his immigration to London from East Africa in the 1970s:

> I grew up with Urdu and Punjabi—they were not a problem. Hindi was more of a problem. When I first went to Delhi I found I had to get myself around Hindi. The conversations there are invariably in Hindi and only this [last visit], partly because we were relaxed and talking about language, I found us slipping into the Punjabi language. We were in a party and clearly there were a lot of Punjabi speakers. They were all speaking in Hindi but when they actually want to tell 'a real thing' which could be a joke, or which could be a particular reference, they always switched into Punjabi.
>
> It was almost like a secret language which only this particular group of people shared. But in a way that's a bit like us, the immigrants here. What is noticeable in schools is that amongst particular groups, the Punjabi speakers, the Gujarati speakers, the Bengali speakers and now perhaps also the Tamil speakers that here are kids who are absolutely proficient in English. They speak English with the same accent, they have a local accent and when they get together, just like other kids who are multilingual, that is Punjabi or Gujarati or whatever, they will slip into, that is their secret code.
>
> That is when they really are themselves and, in a way, [it's] partly also an echo or a reflection of what happens with West Indian speakers, in the end their language is Creole but what they really want to talk is patois, that is cool. The Indian kids are doing the same things. Which I find a very curious way of the language remaining alive. That's been certainly something that I was surprised by, but also very glad that in fact, the language is surviving.

I responded to his thoughts: 'Yes I have seen that and I have seen the reaffirmation, I have seen it with some of the young people so that when they pick up the phone they will answer with "Hello" and then switch to a Punjabi loud and long "*O kidh"an*", that is the way they start their conversation.' He quickly cut in,

> But also the peculiarity, in this particular community there is another

> strand which is sort of an echo of what you are talking about which is a complete and utter denial of wanting to speak the language 'I don't know a language'. I find it amongst Hindu Punjabis that there are these kinds of two poles. There is one which is as you say now that is a part of a particular youth culture which is a part of the Bhangra rap scene which is done, even a sense of the language as a positive language. It's been rid of the association of it being a traditionalist language, my parent's language—there's no way we want to speak that parent's language. It's rid itself of that association because it is now coming via these types like Apache Indian and others—it's cool to speak Punjabi. But I actually don't think that amongst the Hindu Punjabis there is the similar feeling for the language as there is say amongst the Muslims for Mirpuri or for Urdu, or as there is amongst the Gujarati kids for Gujarati. I don't think that is quite happening in our community.

I would agree; the association of language for the British-born generation is not there, perhaps because they do not know which language is theirs—Hindi or Punjabi—because the parents have moved away from both to English. Language, in effect, is not separated from territory, and in the case of partition, territory is not separable from religion. Partition as territorial division implicating both religion and language is experienced and reflected on by the younger generation. As the same friend later stated:

> And that [Punjab and Haryana split] has had the effect of more affective speech for the HPs—what is their territory? Compared to any other Indian you know, you talk to a Kannada speaker then you know it is Kannada for a Malayalam it is from Kerala for Punjabi you think Sikh, Gujarati Gujarat, so what's a Hindu Punjabis territory? Now there's been an attempt, like Haryana state. These are all fictions there is no actual language base, really they belong in Punjab in the sense they are Punjabis so there's been this kind of mental thing of being between two worlds.

What two worlds are being constructed here? He questions a division between two worlds based on two languages and attempts to move beyond the issue. However, the connection to language still lingers.

Tracing Shifts in Identity: Punjabis in Memory; The British-Born as 'HPs'

The salience of memory in making identity can only be explored through the assumptions and thoughts of this British-born generation. The young man in Leicester Square who sparked my quest for understanding is amongst many for whom memories of partition are an aspect of 'becoming' Punjabi. Identity is as contingent on that historical juncture as on their future in Britain. This is not a deterministic manner of connecting diaspora with the homeland and of reducing experiences of being in Britain to aberration of a pure ethnicity. Nevertheless the building blocks of identity through memories include partition, language and religion.[42]

What makes the British-born generation Punjabi? The memory of partition, and remember this is not a coherent myth, forms part of their Punjabi identity. This is true even for young Punjabis who were born in East Africa. For example, one reflective and eloquent man whose parents had migrated to East Africa from pre-partition Punjab, and who migrated to Britain at 17 during the Amin exodus from Uganda stated:

> I think that, for example, the whole partition thing is in a way much more exacerbated, the partition experience is much more exacerbated in the Hindu Punjabis wherever they are irrespective of whether they have actually had direct experience of partition. Because in a way what it really touches upon is on the very deepest sense of well 'who are you now?' You know before partition one still had this ambivalence of what is our state? Who are we? Kind of flipping in several ways. In a way that was fine that was comfortable because there was no question then of a nationality. Part of the modern disease is that unfortunately nationality is primary and [in this] Hindu Punjabis find themselves in a very peculiar problem.

For this British Hindu Punjabi generation, being Punjabi (and their Punjabi identity) is constructed through the accumulation of memories, partially informed by partition, which they experience indirectly through unintentional story-telling. As this quotation reveals, partition is also being connected to issues of homeland, belonging, longing and being a part of the larger diaspora.

The importance of theorising diaspora for Punjabi Hindus underpins this discussion of the formation of the Punjab and the many entanglements

of the shifting Punjabi identity via partition. The diaspora phenomenon is not a new one. As my friend from East Africa later claimed, Hindu Punjabis were always nomads:

> I think this is most interesting that we really are a [true] migrant community and have been for generations. Way before we ever arrived here we have been migrating from ourselves. I have just started to read John Irving's *Son of the Serpent* which has a similar sort of sense because, I am foreigner overseas of course and I am a stranger at home and John Irving has got this character who feels a foreigner in Toronto and a foreigner in Bombay where he was born and that the essential nature of the Indian in the book is to be the foreigner wherever. But I think that this is the essential nature of the Hindu Punjabis.

This quotation stresses the dislocation of the Hindu Punjabi experience. The dislocation is related directly to the formation of the Punjab and the many complexities which have fractured the Punjabi identity to the point of it being assumed to be, by the British-born generation, identical with Sikh identity. Most importantly, however, it is the displacement from West Punjab which 'took place . . . years ago but still reverberates in the general consciousness'.[43] These experiences cast Hindu Punjabis as a diasporic population and as nomads, with a specific manner of being Punjabi.

Identity, then, for British Hindu Punjabis is not a stagnant retention of tradition and values which renders them Punjabi. Memories of language and partition are crucial aspects of the negotiation of Punjabi identity. In terms of language, religion and geographical reference, Punjab and its adjective Punjabi are being identified in the British-born generation as Sikh attributes. Moreover, these are attributes from which Punjabi Hindus seek to separate themselves. Through these changes and shifts of identification away from Punjab the British-born generation do not refer to themselves as Punjabi, or Punjabi Hindu, but as *HP*. When I first heard the phrase during fieldwork I thought it was a sauce (brown sauce), but was told that it was an acronym for 'Hindu Punjabi' and that this was the term that was used for (and by) British-born Hindu Punjabis. This identification is all the more striking because of its specific articulation which can be seen to have been initiated when the British left India and which has found its full form only when HPs were born in Britain.

Punjabi identity for Hindus has changed due to their changing experiences of Punjab's shifting landscape which has taken them from

being Hindus (pre-partition) to Punjabi Hindus (in India), to Hindu Punjabis to HPs (in London). These changing labels indicate the changed but shared identity informed by a shifting past while entering into present-day London through the recollections and silences of the grandparent and parent generations. Partition is manifest as a memory of loss (of property, of homeland, of family, of friends and of identity) which has become a means of collective identification: everyone suffered loss. Most interesting is the manner in which this collective memory is then re-articulated and understood by the British-born generation as a lack of homeland, and as imparting a former status of glory. The specific experience of diaspora for Hindu Punjabis is all the more powerful because of the articulation of loss of homeland in making diaspora. In recounting this transmission and understanding of partition, the imbrication of identity with memory renders negotiation as a starting point for understanding. Unless Punjab's background is surveyed, it remains some faraway and exotic land, an essentially timeless land, important only in so far as it becomes an ethnic adjective for British Punjabis. My task has been to de-exoticise this use of Punjab by problematising its simple geographical referent of identity. To recount the complex history with the specific articulation of Hindu Punjabi negotiations is to connect the Punjabi/Asian/Indian aspect of British born Hindu Punjabis to a specific history without stifling them with a taken-for-granted 'cricket test match' approach to ethnicity.

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Notes

1. I prefer the terms 'British-born or British-raised generation', as used in distinction to 'parental generation', to the less bulky 'first and second generation' because of the implications of using migration as a reference point for those *born* in Britain. Second

generation not only implies that they are the second generation, children of migrants, but that their claims to being British are only one generation old.

2. K. Chanana, 'Partition and Family Strategies: Gender Education Linkages among Punjabi Women in Delhi', *Economic and Political Weekly* (hereafter *EPW*), 23 (April 1993), ws25.

3. For example, see J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), vol. 2; C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright, *The Partition of India* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1970); and A.I. Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

4. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, vol. 2, 181.

5. See R. Menon and K. Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance: Indian State and Abduction of Women during Partition', *EPW*, 24 (April 1993), ws2.

6. Often these are accounts of women's experience such as U. Butalia, 'Community, State and Gender—On Women's Agency during Partition', *EPW*, 28, 17 (1993), ws12. For horror stories of forced abduction, rape, etc., and various interpretations, see Menon and Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance'. For details which include research on the changes in women's status and options in marriage and education, see Chanana 'Partition and Family Strategies'.

7. S. Tharu, 'Rendering Account of the Nation: Partition Narratives and Other Genres of the Passive Revolution', *Oxford Literary Review*, 16, 1–2 (1994), 69–91.

8. G. Pandey, 'In Defence of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu–Muslim Riots in India Today', *Representations*, 37 (Winter 1992), 27–55.

9. My Punjabi teacher and her husband were two of 'the few' migrants that I met during fieldwork who were young adults at the time of partition. (I detail her specific concerns in the section on language below.)

10. Not all of the people I did research with were from refugee families. Some Hindu Punjabis experienced the event simply by living in Indian Punjab, some of them housed refugees (especially their relations), or they may have just known of refugee settlement camps which were found outside borders of large centres such as Jullundur and Amritsar.

11. To ensure confidentiality, names and identifying details of the people who are quoted in this article have been changed or omitted.

12. Past research on Punjabis in Britain concentrates on Asians living in high residential concentration areas (e.g. Southall) and focuses on Sikh and Muslim populations. For example, see Roger Ballard and C. Ballard, 'The Sikhs: The Development of South Asian Settlement in Britain', in J.L. Watson (ed.), *Between Two Cultures* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 21–56; Parminder Bhachu, *Twice Migrants: East African Sikh Settlers in Britain* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1985); Arthur Helweg, *Sikhs in England* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, reprint 1989 [1978]); Verity Saifullah-Khan, 'The Pakistanis: Mirpuri Villages at Home and in Bradford', in Watson, *Between Two Cultures*; Pnina Werbner, *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts, and Offerings among British Pakistanis* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990) and *Economy and Culture in Pakistan: Migrants and Cities in a Muslim Society* (London: Macmillan Press, 1991). Where Hindus are the focus of research the majority of Gujarati speakers and their customs have generally been picked (an exception has been Eleanor Nesbitt's work with Hindu Punjabis such as 'My Dad's Hindu, My Mum's Side are Sikhs', *Issues in*

Religious Identity [University of Warwick paper published by NFAS and University of Warwick, 1991], 'Celebrating and Learning in Community: The Perpetuation of Values and Practices Among Hindu Punjabi Children in Coventry, UK', *Indo-British Review*, 20, 2 (1994) 119–31, and 'Punjabis in Britain: Cultural Histories and Cultural Choices' *South Asia Research*, 15, 2 (1995) 221–40.

13. The section on Memory and Identity is deliberately kept brief, only serving to introduce some of the relevant thinkers and ideas which inform this article. A more detailed consideration of Memory and Identity theory is found in my Ph.D. dissertation.
14. See, for example, A. Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 6 (1990), 295–310; D. Morley and K.H. Chen (eds) *S. Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996); H. Bhabha, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha', in J. Rutherford, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990); and U. Hannerz, 'The World In Creolization', *Africa*, 57, 4 (1987), 546–59.
15. M. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (London: Harper and Row, 1980).
16. P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
17. R. Samuel and P. Thompson, *The Myths We Live by* (London: Routledge, 1990), 7.
18. Two comprehensive historical accounts of the fracturing of the Punjab include, Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*; and P.R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).
19. The five rivers of the Punjab are: the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej.
20. This quotation of Punjab as an 'administrative dream' is taken from one of my informants.
21. During fieldwork I came to use the fictive kin terms 'Uncle' and 'Aunty' for most of the parental generation. These terms were a metaphorical connection between myself and those I researched as well as terms of respect. Thus I continue to use both Uncle and Aunty in the quotes which I have taken from the research.
22. It should be made clear that none of the references or memories were at first solicited, but once iterated and released during conversations, they were encouraged (for an example, see reference to Kohat below).
23. M.U. Memon, 'Partition Literature: A Study of Intizar Husain', *Modern Asian Studies*, 14, 3 (1980), 409.
24. G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of the Events Leading up to and Following the Partition of India* (Delhi: Bhawnani and Sons, 1949).
25. Menon and Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance', ws2.
26. The sense and place of homeland for Hindu Punjabis as being forever lost is a repeated theme and has been detailed elsewhere, see D.S. Raj, 'The Myth of Return—Fact or Fable? Changes in the Diaspora with Examples from London's Hindu Punjabis', paper presented to Diaspora Session, 14th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Copenhagen, 21–24 August 1996 (unpublished).
27. Samuel and Thompson, *The Myths We Live by*, 7.
28. The silences about the complexity of the past and the 'clear' division of the present have already affected young people in Britain, especially with respect to Hindu–Muslim

tension. For example, one young Hindu students' organisation has been speaking to Hindu and Sikh organisations (of the parental generation) around the country about putative acts of conversion to Islam by young Hindu and Sikh women. Fear mongering is encouraged by the terms being used such as 'forced conversions', a heated issue reminiscent of 1920s pre-partition Punjab.

29. While there has been some research on intra-religious tensions (for example, see M. Nye, 'A Place for Our Gods: Tradition and Change among Hindus in Edinburgh', in R. Barot [ed.], *Religion and Ethnicity: Minorities and Social Change in the Metropolis* [Kamper, The Netherlands: Pharos, 1993]; K. Knott, 'Hindu Temple Rituals in Britain: The Reinterpretation of Tradition', in R. Burghart [ed.], *Hinduism in Great Britain: The Perpetuation of Religion in an Alien Cultural Milieu* [London: Tavistock, 1987] 157–79; and S. Vertovec, 'Community and Congregation in London Hindu Temples: Divergent Trends', *New Community*, 18, [1992] 251–64), there has been little academic work done on inter-religious tensions of British Asians (one notable exception is A. Kundu, 'The Ayodhya Aftermath: Hindu versus Muslim Violence in Britain', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 13, 1 [1994], 26–47). Most work on inter-religious factionalisation and difference is from CRE research such as R. Singh, *Immigrants to Citizens: The Sikh Community in Bradford* (Ilkley: The Race Relations Research Unit, Ilkley Community College, 1992).

30. Attempts to distance oneself from the racist label 'Paki' by the British-born generation include quick replies needed to counter illogical and ill-informed racists. Thus being called Paki, although hurtful, could be countered by claiming one was not a Paki, and indeed could not be, if one was not from Pakistan.

31. Two examples of such advertisements are: 'A suitable match is required for a Punjabi Sikh (Ramgarhia) young lady doctor. She is British, single, born September 1961, height 5'6" and non-vegetarian. She is M.B.B.S (King's College) and is a general medical practitioner. She enjoys travelling, music, theatre and socialising. A professional clean shaven *Sikh/Hindu* gentleman is required', and another advertisement also from a Sikh woman which states, 'She would prefer a clean shaven *Sikh*, professional gentleman but would accept a *Hindu* male aged between 29 and 36 years, single, good looking, loving, reliable, with a good sense of humour'.

32. A kaṛā is one of the 'Five Ks' of Sikhism which Oberoi defines as: 'the five external symbols which must be worn by all members of the Khalsa, so called because all five begin with the initial letter "k". The five symbols are: *kes* (uncut hair), *kangha* (comb), *kirpan* (dagger), *kara* (steel bangle) and *kachh* (a pair of breeches)', H. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), xxi.

33. Citing various authorities, Sachdev writes that the changing boundaries of the Punjab 'left Sikhs as the prime "owners" and promoters of Punjabi language', I. Sachdev, 'Predicting Punjabi Linguistic Identity', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 2, 2 (1995), 177.

34. I should make clear that some people amongst whom I did my fieldwork, especially those who migrated directly from the Punjab, would vehemently disagree with this statement. However, for those who are from partition families, or who experienced partition themselves such as my language teacher, preference for Hindi and the claim of Hindi as 'our' language was not uncommon.

35. According to Oberoi: '[Monā] . . . . is at present used for those Sikhs who choose to cut their hair', Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, xxi.

36. Brass writes, 'Gurumukhi and Devanagri both have been and can be used to write either Hindi or Punjabi. Since the Sikh scriptures are written in Gurumukhi Sikhs favour the use of that script to write Punjabi. For the same reason, even those Hindus who acknowledge Punjabi as their mother tongue refuse to acknowledge Gurumukhi as its proper script and prefer to use Devanagri instead.' Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics*, 291. Sachdev states, 'there is little doubt that its [Gurumukhi script's] current status as *the* script for writing Punjabi has developed as direct consequence of its association with Sikh Identity', Sachdev, 'Predicting Punjabi Linguistic Identity', 177.
37. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, 51 explores the importance of Gurumukhī as the Punjabi script of the Sikhs which resonates with religious meaning as a Gurmuk(ī) (person) is 'a follower of the Sikh Gurus and their doctrines'. Oberoi also indicates the fluidity of the meaning of the term Gurmukh. It should be made clear that in London, it is a language usually taught in the gurdwaras, but is now increasingly taught in some schools (O and A level examinations may be taken in Punjabi as well as a university-taught course).
38. Not surprisingly, the only people who did not comment on my Punjabi were Sikhs, who saw me as Sikh because I was learning the language.
39. The irony is that this is already the case in India, where those of the same age as the British-born generation (who are outside of the Punjab, such as Delhi) do not speak Punjabi but understand it.
40. This is parallel with the Muslim Punjabis who might speak Punjabi at home but who are sent to Urdu classes after school or on weekends.
41. Indeed the resources of Hindi popular culture are immense (compared to *regional* languages such as Punjabi or Tamil), and the range of Hindi popular culture in England vastly overwhelms what is available in Punjabi. In this the Bombay film industry, Bollywood, is central. Aside from film and music industries, Hindi is endorsed by the central Indian government; it is a language which is conscientiously encouraged over regional languages. However, Sachdev indicates, 'Punjabi is the only language in North India which has succeeded in establishing its distinctiveness and vitality vis-à-vis Hindi to the extent of recognition at both nation and state levels in India', Sachdev, 'Predicting Punjabi Linguistic Identity', 176.
42. Memory is important to understanding how the young people are *Punjabi*, but this is not the only aspect of their identity, and in other parts of my Ph.D., the experiences of being in Britain as a factor in their 'becoming' are examined. Just to be clear, I do NOT understand the so-called *second generation* in a permanent stasis of migration, dangling from their own cultural noose, somewhere between two worlds.
43. Menon and Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance', ws2.

Displaced Communities: Some Impacts of Partition on Poor Communities

Navtej K. Purewal

The movement of people across the newly created border between India and Pakistan caused a great upheaval in the Punjab region. The displacement of millions of both rural and urban people meant that the process of resettlement of refugees immediately afterwards would have lasting effects on the region's demography. In Amritsar the low income groups which are presently located around the walled city highlight the incapacity of the infrastructure of Amritsar and the urban resettlement operations carried out by the governments of India and Punjab at the time. These groups, which have been settled since 1947–48, exemplify the disruptive nature that the partition of Punjab had not only on low income groups, but on the region as a whole. The living conditions of the poor and their subsequent access to improved material conditions were less than minimal. This article aims to first briefly look at some of the major issues facing the city of Amritsar as a result of partition and then to analyse some of the long-term effects that partition-related migration has had on low income groups.

Introduction

The partition of Punjab has often been discussed in terms of its impact on macro economic and political processes. Few attempts have been made to examine the effects on ordinary people,[1] namely, poor communities which make up 50–60 per cent of urban population in many cities of South Asia. The way in which partition is recounted all too often focuses on the hegemonic perspectives of constitutional history and nation-building leaders and elites.[2] The 'exchange of populations', as has been commonly referred to by official agencies, resulted in the uprooting of more than 18 million people.[3] The upheaval caused by the partition of Punjab and Bengal meant that millions of people had

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to sacrifice security and homes for the cause of nation-building. Those who migrated across the newly demarcated borders between India and Pakistan in 1947 were forced to abandon homes, means of income and survival, and native villages and cities for unfamiliar, less secure surroundings. The focus of this article is the poor of Amritsar and, more specifically, poor communities which have settled around the walled city of Amritsar. An investigation into the socio-economic conditions of the poor of the city reveals that migration due to partition is a key factor in the profile of the urban poor. The living conditions of poor communities who migrated during partition and who are residing around the walled city have generally not improved. This article aims to discuss the socio-economic conditions of the poor in Amritsar through a comparison of partition and non-partition settlements.

Background: Amritsar—Trade Centre to Border Town

Some of the worst affected areas of Punjab were those that had prior to partition been located in the centre of the province and now found themselves on the border of a divided Punjab. Having once been at the crossroads of central Punjab, and a major economic, religious, and cultural centre, Amritsar became the last city on the Grand Trunk Road before the border demarcating India and Pakistan. The economic life of the city suffered greatly as a result. While Amritsar also became the terminus of the East Punjab Railways, trade between the two sides of Punjab became strained because of trade restrictions and enforcement of income tax clearance requirements. The area to the west of Amritsar became, in practical terms, very distant, and a move was inadvertently made towards developing economic links with the rest of East Punjab and India. Raw materials which had previously been obtained from towns in West Punjab and chemicals and machine goods earlier obtained from Karachi were now only available from Bombay. The textile industry among other industries in Amritsar which had historically been significantly reliant upon the north-western region was now forced to search for markets in the Indian interior.[4] Thus the importing of raw materials, machinery, and chemicals, the two-day burden of railway transport for freight, and the shifting of markets for manufactured goods became obstacles for the industrial and commercial sectors in Amritsar.[5]

The border imposed other restrictions on Amritsar. Tension between India and Pakistan caused a sense of insecurity in areas along the border

which, apart from forcing defence measures, deterred both private and public investment. Already existing businesses in Amritsar were also affected by this. A large number of industrialists and traders expressed a desire to move to other cities and even other states.[6] In an effort to prevent the liquidation of the area's industrial base the government passed the East Punjab Factories (Control and Dismantling) Act, 1948 which put heavy restrictions on the rights of any person to move machinery or any other parts from a factory without official permission.[7] However, many businesses were successful in shifting their interests to other cities.[8] Similarly, those refugees from the west with capital to begin new businesses predominantly opted to settle in the larger commercial centres of Delhi, Bombay and Ludhiana rather than in the uncertain climate of Amritsar.[9]

The demise of Amritsar as a commercial and manufacturing centre had a dramatic effect on the poor with regard to income-generating options. Even though Punjab had been an industrially underdeveloped state with high agricultural, and small-scale and handloom industries output, the labour-absorbing economic activities which had historically been based in Amritsar were now moving to other, less insecure locations. Amritsar's commercial and industrial sectors could no longer provide skilled and unskilled employment to the poor in the same measure. Even while smaller textile, trade and manufacturing houses emerged as the new form of productive activity in the city, the degree of job opportunities available to the poor became minimal. Post-partition Amritsar slowly became static in its economic and population growth. Economic in-migration dropped dramatically, and one result was a steadily decreasing urban population growth which eventually saw the rise of Ludhiana as the new economic centre of East Punjab. As is clearly evident from the growth of the city's population in the past two decades, Ludhiana has become the magnetic force for economic investment, industry and labour.[10]

Contemporary Amritsar

Since the partition of Punjab the average percentage growth of Amritsar has steadily decreased whereby it has consistently fallen below the state average (see Table 1). As is evident in the 1951 data on Amritsar, the city's population figures were greatly altered as a result of partition with rates of growth responding to the political turbulence in the region.[11]

Table 1

Urban Population Growth of Amritsar, Ludhiana and East Punjab

Year	*Total Population of Amritsar with Percentage Increase*	*Total population of Ludhiana with Percentage Increase*	*Increase of East Punjab's Urban Population (percentage)*
1941	391,010	111,639	N/A
1951	325,747 (–16.69)	153,795 (37.76)	20.02
1961	376,295 (15.52)	244,072 (58.70)	29.06
1971	434,951 (15.59)	401,176 (64.37)	25.27
1981	589,299 (30.79)	606,250 (51.12)	44.51
1991	709,456 (19.27)	1,012,062 (66.94)	29.11

Source: Government of Punjab (1982), *Statistical Abstract of Punjab*, Chandigarh p. 56 in Oberai and Singh, *Census of India, 1991*.

The shifting of businesses and administrative offices after partition was the beginning of the decline of the city. In post-1947 East Punjab, Amritsar became increasingly a city of historical significance in the region rather than one with potential as a future major city of the state. Trade in textiles and dry fruits, and small-scale handloom manufacturing still continued to be important activities in Amritsar. However, the scale of these activities in an increasingly industrialising era meant that Amritsar could not compete with cities like Ludhiana which, by the 1970s, had become the largest city in size and in economic growth.

Along with the gradual economic decline of Amritsar, employment available became limited. This specifically affected skilled occupations with demand for products of weaving, pottery-making, and dyeing, which had been occupations for generations in the city, going down. As a result the income-generating activities of these craftsmen became diversified and forced many to take on unskilled jobs. The changes in occupational structure created by the declining economic climate of Amritsar, in many cases, challenged traditional caste hierarchies which had previously restricted occupational mobility among the lower castes.[12] However, this did not result in massive upward mobility of low caste groups. Instead, there was increased amount of occupational mobility within low caste groups which also meant that jobs of lowest pay and status became more readily available to groups which may have previously attached social stigma to them.

Even these jobs have become scarce. With challenges posed to the stability of caste hierarchy by the changing economic activities in

Amritsar, the main priority of poor communities is to find jobs which offer steady sources of income and economic security. Government and railway jobs are the most sought after with the security, housing and long-term nature of the employment they offer. These jobs are difficult to obtain, and most people are forced to turn to the private and informal sectors. Becoming cycle rickshaw pullers, sweepers, shop assistants, petty traders and vendors, and manual labourers are the most common occupational options for the poor. These professions are the lowest paid and the most irregular sources of income.

Initial Impact of Partition

The forced migration of people on both sides of the newly formed border meant that entire communities were uprooted from their native surroundings, livelihoods and homes. For many rural refugees migration across the border involved a journey to a destination where they would be allotted agricultural land. However, for others the urban centres close to the border presented an option of a smaller distance to travel and also held out the assurance of the economic dynamism and absorptive nature of cities. Amritsar at the time of partition was the first city across the border on the Grand Trunk Road and also the largest city in East Punjab and for many offered more hopes of economic survival than did other urban centres. The processes, discussed earlier, of the demise of Amritsar's commercial and industrial bases would prove to be a disappointment to many partition refugees who chose to settle in Amritsar.

Mass migration on both sides caused the pool of skilled and unskilled labour in East Punjab to change significantly. A large number of urban Muslims from East Punjab who left for Pakistan were artisans, craftsmen, blacksmiths and potters while a majority of Sikhs and Hindus coming from the western side belonged to the trading classes.[13] According to government estimates, the number of Muslim artisans who left for Pakistan numbered 1,854,188 and the number of non-Muslim artisans who settled in East Punjab totalled 252,873.[14] This created a gap in the labour structure which, for Amritsar, had a particularly significant impact on the textile and embroidery trade. An imbalance was created as a result of this migration of labour. The poor, low caste refugees who came to settle in Amritsar were from a variety of occupational backgrounds.[15] Many poor employment seekers changed professions in response to the skewed demand created in certain sectors, and many

were forced to take on what may have been considered comparatively menial tasks and, more importantly, less reliable sources of income. What resulted was a large pool of both skilled and unskilled labour competing for a limited number of jobs. Much of the skilled labour was forced to take on unskilled jobs.

Resettlement as Permanent Settlement

The resettlement processes that immediately followed the arrival of refugees, though treated at the time as a transitional stage, formed new patterns of residential localities which would set the precedent for the future. Immediate relief for refugees was prioritised over long-term allocation and rehabilitation schemes that were being implemented in rural areas. The problem of overcrowding in relief camps where most refugees were being sheltered was additional pressure for a swift rehabilitation policy.[16] In the meantime, the unauthorised occupation of Muslim evacuee houses by local residents and, in many cases, by civil servants meant that the supply of houses for refugees rapidly diminished before a scheme could even be developed and executed. Evicting these unauthorised occupants became a task too large to contemplate for the concerned authorities. By the time the survey of Muslim immovable property was finally completed in June 1948, most of the houses had already been occupied.

A further pressure on the supply of vacant houses came from the influx of landless refugees who could not secure employment in rural areas and opted instead to move to towns and cities.[17] For the most part, refugees were forced to live under the most basic of conditions in public buildings or in make-shift structures on government land until government assistance arrived. The disturbances at the time of partition had resulted in substantial damage to houses and buildings.[18] People who occupied evacuee houses were not provided with necessary repairs until years later while many of those who were only given plots of land to build make-shift homes found that these plots were their permanent homes.

The overall outcome of urban resettlement policies in Amritsar was that refugees did not benefit from the partially implemented rehabilitation programmes. Another important point is that wealthy and influential people were able to reap the benefits of the free-for-all situation created by partition. As in the walled city, these privileged people, both refugee and local, managed to gain accommodation and land far in excess of

what had been documented as appropriate allotment standards. Thus the immediate resettlement process at the time of partition in Amritsar further deepened class and caste inequalities.

The Study

Most recent estimates from government-notified areas as to the total slum population in the city show in 1981, 52 recognised settlements and in 1991, 61 recognised settlements.[19] While official data available on low income groups only considers those 'slum' settlements which are notified by the municipal corporation where the right to reside on land is not legally disputed, this article chose from a sample which includes all settlements which are lacking basic public services and which exist on either disputed or undisputed land.

The definition of what the term 'slum' actually designates in government literature is ambiguous.[20] While the Amritsar Municipal Corporation estimated in 1993 that between 19 and 20 per cent of the total population was living in slums, the fieldwork done in this study in 1995 estimates the figure of slum settlements to be close to 50 per cent of the total population. Since the largest concentration of low income groups in the city is along the outside of the walled city, the sample was taken solely from this area of the city. This article constitutes part of the findings of a field survey carried out in Amritsar during 1995. A total number of 276 households were interviewed in 15 colonies around the walled city. An overwhelming majority of these poor localities are of low castes—Valmikis, Scheduled Castes, Majbi Sikhs, Ravi Dassis and Christians. Partition features as a factor since it was found that distinct partition communities are still living in the localities where they first settled between 1947 and 1948. These localities offer insights into how these communities compare with others with regard to household characteristics and overall living conditions.

The Settlements

The analysis focuses on four settlements, two of which are classified as partition settlements (Angarh and Gujjerpura) and two which are classified as non-partition settlements (Lahori Gate and Indira Colony). These colonies were selected on the basis of high proportions of partition residents in Angarh and Gujjerpura and the virtual non-representation of partition migration in samples taken from Lahori Gate and Indira

Colony. The settlement sample data are taken as the two partition settlements, looking at both partition and non-partition residents, and also as the aggregates of the two partition and the two non-partition colonies. All four settlements lie along the Outer Circular Road and are within

Figure 1: **Migration in Partition Colonies**

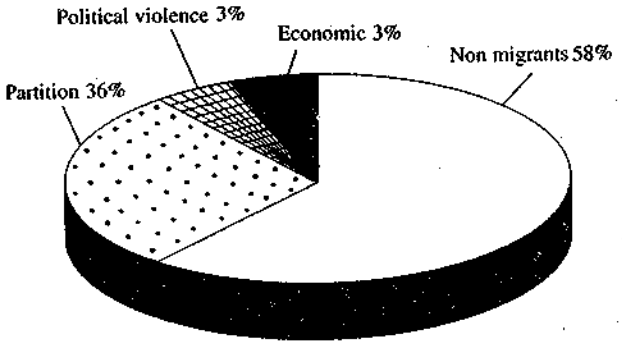
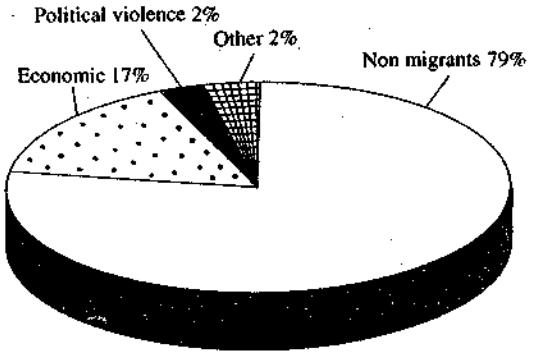


Figure 2: **Migration in Non-partition Colonies**



a 5-kilometre radius of one another. The samples taken from Angarh and Gujjerpura reveal that 36 per cent of the aggregate population of both settlements comprises partition migrants while the samples taken from Lahori Gate and Indira Colony show an absence of partition migrants (see Figures 1 and 2). However, economic migration in non-partition settlements (17 per cent) is considerably higher than in partition settlements (3 per cent) whereas migration due to political violence, mainly due to post-1984 activities, is more or less the same between the two types of settlements.

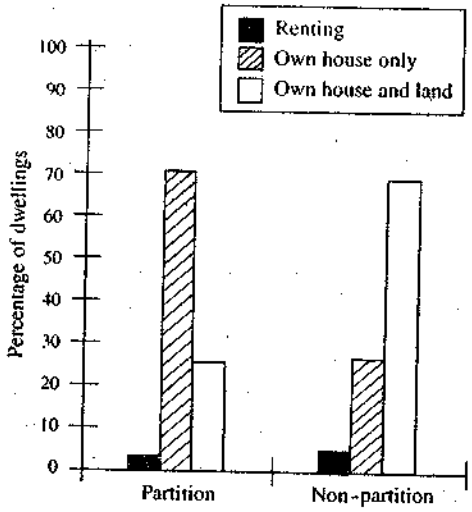
Partition Settlements

A historical profile of Gujjerpura and Angarh reveals that the first residents of these colonies settled during the period of resettlement as a result of partition. The original settlers were partition migrants and have had a strong impact on the formation of the settlements. Prior to partition part of the area on which Gujjerpura now exists housed a burial ground for the local Muslim community and part of it was an open space for the British to keep and train their horses. The grave site was not maintained as a religious site after the majority of Muslims left. Therefore, after partition, the land was no longer used on either count and was put to use by refugees from the west who could not manage to find housing elsewhere in the city. People who began to settle in this area were told that the land, being unfavourable for development as a grave site, would not be disputed and they would therefore be allowed to stay without threat of eviction. Being Waqf Board land (particularly as a burial ground) the land has not been disputed and residents have not complained of harassment to vacate the land. There were two types of initial settlements in Gujjerpura both of which occurred between 1947 and 1948: (*a*) people coming from Pakistan; and (*b*) people already living in Amritsar who saw the opportunity to acquire land near the walled city to build their homes.

Angarh was similarly founded by partition refugees, most of whom occupied Muslim evacuee homes. The colony is divided by a road which separates those households who were partition migrants and those who settled thereafter either as squatters or as private purchasers. A number of the latter type of residents have managed to acquire legal titles to their homes while partition households have been proportionately unsuccessful in doing so (see Figure 3). 'Own house only' implies no legal ownership of the land, and 'own house and land' implies legal

ownership. Political patronage towards poor residential communities is a phenomenon which has been an integral part of the process of development of infrastructure and improvement in living conditions. From sample data it seems evident that non-partition residents have been closer to these sources of influence and power either through the purchase of illegally subdivided plots from government-connected sellers or through the leadership of local party members.

Figure 3: **Types of Occupation of Dwelling**

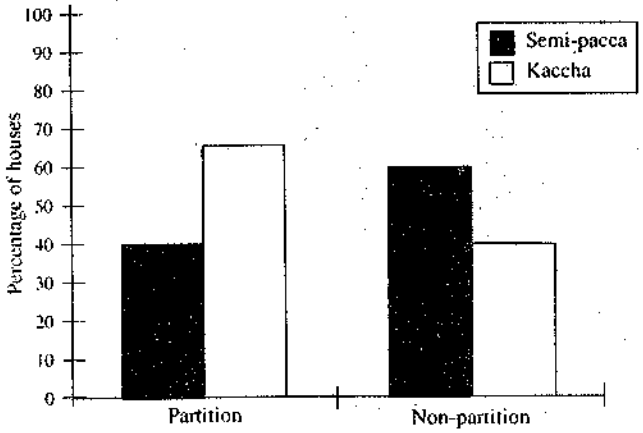


As is the case with Gujjerpura, Angarh exists on Waqf Board land where, prior to partition, predominantly low income Muslim groups had been living. Waqf Board land is donated for charitable causes by economically prosperous members of the Muslim community, and if low income groups (Muslim or non-Muslim) were given this land to make their homes, then contemporary post-partition tolerance of the municipal corporation of people living on Waqf Board land is both a continuation and recognition of pre-partition agreements. When people came to settle at partition, there were some built-up areas of basic housing structures with no amenities. Those who settled around 1947 occupied houses which were deserted by people who left to go to Pakistan. Those who came afterwards occupied land upon which they built their

homes. Eventually most of the surrounding area became occupied by the dumping ground on one side and the railroad tracks on the other.

The housing types within the partition settlements show a discrepancy between the quality of housing of partition residents and non-partition residents (see Figure 4). This can be attributed to private selling and purchasing that non-partition residents have been active in. These houses are, in comparison to those partition settlers, more recently constructed and made of newer, stronger materials. Also, the houses that partition families occupied were in many cases never refurbished by the rehabilitation authorities. Instead, people were left to make the necessary improvements on their own.

Figure 4: **Type of Housing**



A comparison of the average monthly income of partition and non-partition households from the sample shows that non-partition families have a slightly higher income than partition families (see Figure 5).

However, more interestingly the data on the number of educated household members and average household size show that partition households, while averaging Rs 200 less in monthly income, have a higher standard of education and also have a smaller family size, on the average (see Figure 6).

Figure 5: **Average Monthly Income**

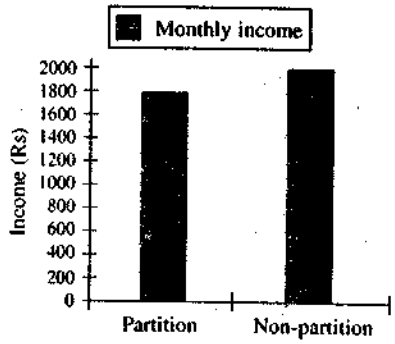
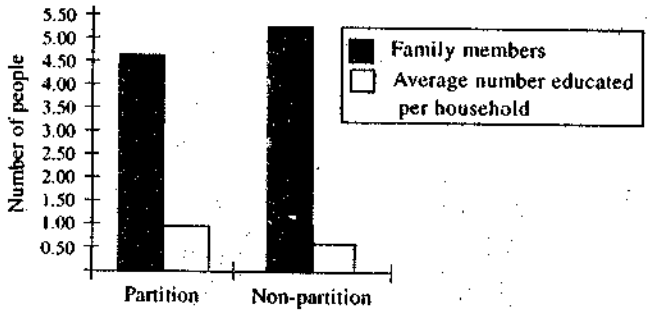


Figure 6: **Average Number of Members Per Household**



Case Study 1
Prabhjot Kaur—Angarh resident

Prabhjot Kaur's family moved to Amritsar from their village near Sialkot at the time of partition. Upon only a few days of arriving in Amritsar, her family moved to their present house. As a young, newly married woman at the time, she recalls the network of families, all of whom were partition migrants, which came together to the settlement in search of shelter. At that time, Angarh was less than half its present size with several hundred built-up houses. Prabhjot's family was fortunate enough to find one of these houses, albeit a *kaccha* structure, where many families were forced to build their own houses with no government assistance. The maintenance and repairs to the house have all been

done by Prabhjot, her husband, and his extended family who live in the same *mohallah*.

It took several years before either she or her husband could find any form of reliable income. Having been agricultural labourers in Sialkot, the transition to Amritsar was not an easy one. Here, there was only enough work for the women in the nearby farmland, which was also seasonal, while the men had to search the walled city for jobs. Prabhjot's husband pulled a rickshaw for several years before his health deteriorated. After that he opened his own cycle repair shop which he runs from the house and earns a meagre Rs 600 per month. Prabhjot, along with her daughter, has worked in Bhararíwal as an occasional agricultural labourer for many years. Now she mainly stays home and sometimes does piecework for a local tailoring business. She has three children, two of whom are being educated to eighth standard and matric level, respectively. Prabhjot's family do not own their home nor do they have a title to the land. Nonetheless, she does not feel that her home is under immediate threat from the authorities even without a lease title. However, she does worry about the future of Angarh as a long-term home for her family without safe drinking water or proper sanitation facilities.

Non-partition Settlements

Non-partition settlements that were surveyed have several distinguishing characteristics. Lahori Gate shows evidence of residents who moved into the locality before or during partition into houses which had been deserted by people leaving for Pakistan. It was these deserted houses that became the homes of many local people who were either homeless or were eager to leave the congested living conditions within the walled city. Even though allotments were made for displaced people as a result of partition, few partition migrants were able to occupy these homes as they had been previously taken by local people. The allotment process was ineffective in providing housing compensation to urban partition refugees. The opportunity to move out of the walled city was inadvertently made available to local people through these allotments. Eventually the renting and sale of houses in these areas went into the hands of local residents, never reaching the partition refugees whom the allotments were intended for.

The Waqf Board has granted rental agreements to those people who have built their homes on Waqf Board land. There is also evidence

that people have purchased 'rights' to land from private squatters without any legal documents of ownership. Commercialisation of low income housing markets is a phenomenon which tends to arise in situations where there is the granting of land titles or in urbanising areas or large cities where even illegal land settlement is a scarce commodity. However, with the availability of free, vacant land going down in Amritsar, this seems to be a process which will be increasingly spread to other colonies. Partition colonies show less evidence of the operation of these forces as they exist on uncertain though unthreatening land tenures and do not share the same levels of integration into the local political patronage system.

A comparison of the physical conditions of non-partition with partition settlements brings to light the impact that original settler communities have on the developmental processes of residential localities. Where partition refugees were the first settlers, a pattern has emerged of slow infrastructural development and static land acquisition. Where non-partition residents were the first settlers, the provision of public services such as sewerage and municipal corporation water taps has been faster. Even in Indira Colony which was built on top of a dumping ground and where some of the worst housing conditions in the city exist, local residents' associations have been successful in maintaining links with local members of the legislative assembly and with Communist Party of India (Marxist) activists. While there are only a number of sources of drinking water serving the entire colony as a result of the contaminated nature of the land, contact with local political elements has meant that Indira Colony is one of the key localities in the city to be included in the nationwide Urban Basic Services Programme (UBSP).

Non-partition communities benefited from the rise in housing stock that was created by Muslim evacuees. This opportunistic spirit of non-partition residents from the occupation of evacuee homes to the provision of services and, more recently, to the delivery of legal titles has resulted in these settlements being better off in respect of rudimentary infrastructural facilities than partition settlements. The ability of these communities to pressurise local political leaders and bureaucrats to concede their demands exceeds the capacity of partition communities to do so. A partial explanation for this could be the inability to recover from the forced migration process and the failure of resettlement and rehabilitation authorities to provide adequate facilities for refugees to re-establish themselves in the new environment.

Case Study 2
Ram Nath—Lahori Gate resident

Ram Nath and his family are Valmikis[21] who have lived in Amritsar for at least three generations. Prior to moving to the Lahori Gate slum (which is actually located just outside of Lahori Gate) his family had been living inside the walled city in Katra Kaserian. In 1947 his father, through contacts with relatives already living outside of the walled city, discovered that many houses which were about to be vacated by Muslims leaving for Pakistan would be free for occupation. His immediate and extended family occupied these houses before they could be taken by others. The Nath ancestral home in the walled city was already becoming too crowded to house the entire family, therefore the opportunity to relieve some of this pressure was welcomed.

Several years after partition rehabilitation schemes came into operation in the area, Ram's family identified themselves to the authorities as partition refugees from West Punjab in order to be allowed to keep their home. Since then, apart from occasional harassment from the military which claims the land surrounding the colony, Ram derives a strong sense of security from the monthly rent that he pays to the Waqf Board for the land. His neighbours, upon obtaining land titles, have sold their houses (or at least the right to live on the land) in order to find better quality accommodation. Ram, however, has decided instead to rent one room in his house in order to gain a steady income of Rs 200 per month. As a sweeper for the municipal corporation, Ram has been able to secure similar jobs for two of his sons. He has six children, all of whom are working and none of whom have been educated beyond class two.

Summary

The partition of Punjab had a detrimental effect on the role that Amritsar would play in the newly constructed East Punjab. The poor, mainly low caste, communities that came to settle in the city from west of the border exemplify the disruption that was caused by the creation of the border. In their struggle to survive and to reassemble homes and livelihoods in their new environment, the process of resettlement failed to deliver in the main.

Partition migrants surveyed in Amritsar were seen to have lower material standards of living, though having slightly higher numbers of educated family members and smaller average household size. Non-

partition communities have shown themselves to be more dynamic in terms of accumulating resources, developing contacts with influential bodies and in selling their houses in order to purchase houses in better localities. Partition settlements could be described as static in these regards and have remained structurally marginal to even informal networks. While both types of settlements share in common their structural marginality and substandard living conditions, the factors discussed here may in the future prove to increase the differential between them as commercialisation and greater competition for housing and land become more prevalent.

The process of nation-building relied upon the demarcation of boundaries and the support and sacrifice of entire communities assuming that they would resettle and accordingly adjust. Caste and class inequalities which existed prior to the partition of Punjab became more rigid in many urban centres through uneven distribution. With neither capital nor influence, the poorer partition migrants were immediately at a disadvantage in comparison to even poor local communities. The sense of displacement and marginalisation experienced by partition communities in Amritsar is evidence that forced migration, even 50 years on, has had lasting effects on these communities.

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12. Satish Saberwal, *Mobile Men: Limits to Social Change in Urban Punjab* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1990).
13. Rai, *Punjab since Partition*, 174.
14. *Statistical Abstract of Punjab*, 1947–50, 159.
15. Harish Sharma's study of artisan castes in Punjab provides an in-depth historical background to the processes of social change among artisans prior to partition. See Harish C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab: A Study of Social Change in Historical Perspective, 1849–1947* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996).
16. Gyanesh Kudaisya, 'The Demographic Upheaval of Partition: Refugees and Agricultural Settlement in India, 1947–67', *South Asia*, 18, special issue (1995), 73–94.
17. Rai, *Punjab since Partition*, 170.
18. Kudaisya, 'The Demographic Upheaval of Partition'.
19. Sandhu, *The City and Its Slums*.
20. The term 'slum' used here indicates low levels of income, substandard housing structures and an absence of public services.
21. Saberwal, *Mobile Men*, 51–67.

Book Reviews

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Pritam Singh and Shinder S. Thandi (eds), *Globalisation and the Region: Explorations in Punjabi Identity* (Coventry: Association for Punjab Studies [UK], 1996), 416 pp. £18.99 (pb).ISBN 1-874699-05-4

Most of the 25 papers contained in this volume were first delivered at the First International Conference on Punjab Studies held at Coventry University in June 1994 to coincide with the launch of *IJPS*, which had as its theme 'Punjab Identity: Continuity and Change'. The organisation of the conference sessions is reflected in the arrangement of the book, which is similarly chronological, with four sections devoted to papers dealing respectively with Punjab in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-1947 periods, and with the Punjab diaspora.

As most conference organisers find out to their cost, the enthusiasm of the original idea and the initial planning has long since evaporated when they are finally faced with the thankless task of trying to make some sort of coherent sense out of a bunch of papers wildly different in theme and quality in the introduction which has to be compiled some years later for the conference volume. In this case, however, the editors have chosen to employ an alternative strategy, deferring their summaries of the chapters to brief prefaces before each section, thus allowing their short overall introduction to be largely devoted to a well-argued justification for the title chosen for the book, on the grounds of the contemporary need for areally generated discourses of the type represented by Punjab Studies to confront and to be conducted within the inescapable context of the ever more powerful dynamics of globalisation.

It is of course particularly in the diaspora that such an approach will be of overriding concern, and it is no accident that two of the volume's most stimulating papers come from Britain. In very different ways, both go to the heart of the central questions: what is to be understood by a 'Punjabi identity', and what are the contexts for such understandings to be established? In a long and closely argued chapter directed towards some of the constructs of the colonial period, Arvind-pal Singh offers a theoretically highly informed critique of unexamined postulates of Punjabi identity, with some deftly directed ironical asides on what happens without such an examination, and concludes with an appeal to catch up both with pre-colonial past and with contemporary thinking by starting to think about 'a language of cultural difference as opposed to cultural identity'. Some of the dynamics such a perceptual adjustment needs to embrace are explored in the short chapter presented at the end of the book

with a nicely judged flipness by Raminder Kaur and Virinder Singh who call into question the focus upon origin in diaspora studies and use the telling example of modernised Bhangra to suggest the need for shifting categories like 'Br-Asian/Transl-Asian' to start understanding the shifting identities of the contemporary British diaspora.

Such radical questionings run somewhat counter to the internal dynamic of a subject like 'Punjab Studies' (in whose development the APS and PRG have played so important a role), which needs to attract a variety of disciplines and approaches to a presumed common ground at its centre. The common ground is most often evoked by reference to the imagined cultural unity of the supposedly ecumenical world of the Ranjit Singh kingdom. The editors themselves retreat from the earlier boldness of their introduction towards speculating on what might have happened had the *Durbar* survived. Many of the papers predictably opt for more or less sophisticated restatements of this Sikh-based vision of a unity-in-diversity, which reached its culmination in the immediate pre-colonial period, and whose subsequent fracture Punjab Studies is now to mend. Others take more interesting account of the colonial mechanics which subverted the organic unities of that 'enchanted universe' so enticingly presented in Harjot Oberoi's *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, naturally cited in more papers than any other recent work. This is most notably true of the opening chapter by Roger Ballard on the changing nature of religious identities in Punjab during the colonial period. It also characterises some of the more specialist-looking later contributions, such as the interesting treatment by Kamlesh Mohan of the construction of gender identities in the colonial Punjab in a long chapter which is one of the few actually to include Punjabi quotations.

Some idea of the admirably wide disciplinary spread of the chapters beyond the more familiar areas of history and religious studies may be illustrated by selective mention of, for example, the literary studies represented by Athar Tahir on the poetry of Qadir Yar, and Chaman Lai on post-1984 representations of Punjabis in Hindi literature, or the challenges to received notions of social trends in the diaspora offered by Parminder Bhachu on British Punjabi women in the 1990s, or Bruce La Brack on changing Punjabi/Sikh identities over the century in California. Reference to these and other chapters would have been facilitated by the provision of some sort of index, and there are rather too many typos for comfort. But such criticisms of detail must be outweighed by an appreciation

of the very considerable service to the development of the subject which the editors have performed in producing this collection.

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D. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (London: Macmillan, 1994), xx and 313 pp. (hb). ISBN 0-333-55049-8

Of the many ingenious exploits of the British during their 200-year presence in South Asia, one of the most significant was the creation and maintenance of a European style native-based colonial army, to which were entrusted the formidable responsibilities of holding and defending the empire. British expansion in India, from the Battle of Plassey in 1757 to the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, was carried out by this colonial army, which consisted mainly of native regiments led by British officers. Then, as the imperial rulers consolidated their hold in the second half of the nineteenth century, the army was mainly responsible for holding the empire. It was also instrumental in protecting the empire's borders, as well as Britain's far-flung interests in the East, featuring in most of her military engagements in the nineteenth century. In the final decades of British rule in India, the Indian army made massive contributions to Britain's war efforts in the two World Wars, while domestically in India, it remained the last line of defence against internal disorder and an indispensable instrument of coercion against threats to the colonial state.

As the keystone of British empire, the Indian army has attracted its fair share of historical attention. There has certainly been no dearth of literature on the Indian Army. Traditionally, the literature was dominated mainly by the 'bugle and drum' genre of military history, concentrating on regimental histories, military formations and uniforms, accounts of campaigns, wars and biographies written by ex-colonial officials or amateur historians. More recently, research has been undertaken by a number of professional historians in the attempt to throw light on the wider historical significance of the military in colonial India, in particular the relationship between the imperial armed forces and colonial society.[1]

[1] See, for instance Stephen Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contributions to the Development of a Nation* (Berkeley, 1971); Dirk Kolff, *Nawkar, Rajput, Sepoy: An Ethno-History of the Military Market in North India* (Cambridge, 1989); Seema Alavi, *North Indian Military Culture in Transition c. 1770-1830* (Delhi, forthcoming).

Drawing together old wisdom and new research and concerns, Dr David Omissi has written a very readable and lucid history of the post-1857 Indian Army. In *The Sepoy and the Raj*, Omissi argues that colonial power and authority in India was underpinned by the colonial armed forces, a mainly native force commanded by British officers. Constantly aware that their presence in India depended ultimately on their monopoly of force, the British carefully 'fostered the structures of military collaboration upon which their power depended' (p. 234). The author tries to show that this relationship between the sepoys and the raj was not merely a mercenary one; for more than just pay and pension the sepoys participated in the colonial enterprise because of *izzat*—'for the honor and standing of themselves, their family, their caste and their regiment' (p. 235).

The book is at its best in explaining how the British recruited and why those social groups which were targeted for recruitment responded. In Chapter 1, a useful analysis is provided of changes in British recruitment after the Mutiny/Rebellion of 1857, and how the 'martial race' theory came to inform British recruitment policies from the 1880s. There follows in Chapter 2 a sound analysis of why the chosen recruits responded to the British call to arms. Here the relationship between economic incentives and military service is well made—'Indian recruits would normally join the army only in the conscious pursuit of their own economic objectives' (p. 74).

Omissi then goes on to argue that 'Indian soldiers clearly did not fight just for pay' (p. 111). In the third chapter on 'Fighting Spirit', the author argues that honour, shame and intense loyalty to the King–Emperor fostered the deep attachment which the sepoy held for the Raj. Here the author relies almost exclusively on censors' reports of correspondence between Indian soldiers and their families during the First World War. While such materials, mainly letters written home by soldiers from the Western Front and Mesopotamia, constitute an important source of subaltern history, they need to be handled carefully. From the tone and content of correspondence, it appears that sepoys were evidently aware that their letters home were being read and censored. Hence the letters were often written as much for the consumption of military authorities as for the soldiers' relatives in India. Thus Dr Omissi's thesis on the soldier's sense of honour and shame, constructed on the basis of these letters, needs further and more thorough analysis.

The author then takes up the theme of dissent. Omissi quite rightly points out that in institutional terms the remarkable feature of the Indian army after the Great Rebellion of 1857 was its general quietude. 'There

were 14 minor mutinies in the Indian Army between 1886 and 1930, none of them involving more than one battalion. Few of these outbreaks resembled, even in miniature, the events of 1857' (p. 238). It seems then that dissent was a major problem faced by military authorities after 1857. Yet Omissi has painstakingly detailed the odd case of malingering and desertion by some disaffected soldiers, all happening during the period of the First World War, perhaps making too fine a point on things that were rather inconsequential.

There is, however, the bigger question of how the recruiting grounds were maintained and insulated, a salient point which the author has not devoted attention to. There were certainly events that threatened the stability of parts of the army, which worried the British authorities. The canal colonies agitation in 1907 and the Akali movement in the 1920s, both occurring in the Punjab, the primary recruiting ground of the Indian Army, had the military and civil authorities worried. Yet, despite efforts by the agitators to destabilise the army, the military remained largely untainted. The author states on page 151 that 'nationalism had little impact on the ranks, and attempts by Congress to subvert the army got nowhere'. This is revealing of the success which the British had achieved in insulating the army from such influences. Cantonments may be insulated, but soldiers do not spend all their time in military camps. How did the British authorities prevent sedition from infiltrating into the soldiers' homes and the recruiting grounds?

In the final chapter on military power and colonial rule, Omissi examines the internal security functions of the army. This is an important chapter which seeks to explain the very basis of colonial order. While the author is able to make the point that military force was used in varying degrees in dealing with threats like peasant and tribal uprisings, terrorism, labour unrest, communal violence and civil disobedience, he does not sufficiently explain how civil and military authorities in India developed policies governing the use of the military in India, especially to deal with the mounting nationalist movement in the 1920s and 1930s.

Despite certain gaps and omissions, *The Sepoy and the Raj* represents an important contribution to the limited scholarly literature on the British colonial army in India. The research is impressive, judging from the extensive array of primary and secondary sources used. But this study could have been considerably enriched had the author actually utilised archival materials outside the India Office Library in London and foraged through the wealth of materials in the National Archives of India, the

Lahore Secretariat and various provincial archives and district offices in both India and Pakistan.

Omissi rightly points out in his preface that there has been a 'virtual absence of the Indian Army from the relevant textbooks [on colonial India]' and more research needs to be done in this area. This thoroughly researched and well-written book has gone some way in filling this lacuna.

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Ian Talbot, *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), xiv and 246 pp. Rs 395. ISBN 0-19-577657-7

For the past 50 years the emphasis in explaining the partition of India has been on its high politics dimensions. This has been in part because of the relative availability of the record of the high politics story, but in part too because the severe trauma experienced by so many who went through the partition process on the ground left individuals unable or unwilling to recall what they had endured. The outcome has been that the driving forces behind partition have been understood almost entirely at the elite level, while what it meant, both to the 15 million or so souls who migrated, often in the midst of bloody horrors beyond belief, and to the millions more who perpetrated such acts of horror, has been ignored. In recent years, however, there has been growing interest in these matters amongst historians led by Gyan Pandey of Delhi University and Mushirul Hasan of the Jamia Millia Islamia. With this book Ian Talbot joins this welcome development. In doing so he is concerned with exploring two issues: the popular dimensions of the demand for Pakistan, with the aim of modifying current elite interpretations of events; and the human dimensions of partition with the aim of enabling voices, too long silent, to be heard.

In the first part of the book, which addresses popular participation in the Pakistan movement, Talbot analyses varieties of crowd behaviour—processions, hartals, picketing, trespassing, riots—and assesses their significance. He is particularly concerned with demonstrating the role of crowd activity in reinforcing communal identity and in legitimising the claims of the Muslim League. Talbot goes on to examine the activities of a virtually unknown group, the Muslim National Guards, and details their

role both in parading the idea of Muslim nationality through towns and cities of northern India and in symbolising through their ceremonial roles the claims of Pakistani statehood. The section closes by switching attention to the Punjab countryside and focusing on the struggle between the Muslim League and the Unionist party in the years from 1944 to 1947. Here Talbot assesses the extent to which pressures from below influenced the decisions made and the strategies adopted by elites.

The second part strives to understand 'the emotional and psychological impact of Partition'. Talbot uses novels, short stories and verse in Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and English to probe the human dimensions of the partition experience. After adumbrating the context of migration from India to Pakistan he makes particular use of autobiographies to explore the horrors of journeys by train to the new Muslim state. Finally he homes in on one story, that of Hurmat Bibi, who gave oral testimony in the 1980s. Her statement, which was published under the auspices of the Information and Culture Department of the Punjab government, while not perhaps entirely free of the 'official' view, nevertheless succeeds in rounding off the book with a human story of great power.

Talbot rightly says that the arguments of this book are 'suggestive rather than exhaustive'. His suggestions, however, are well taken and offer promising signposts to future research. One concern of Jinnah biography, for instance, is how on earth did this very Westernised man, with only a halting command of one north Indian vernacular tongue, succeed in appealing to millions of ordinary Muslims. Talbot's analysis of the ways in which he was received in various cities points to a popular desire to embrace the Quaid-i Azam in traditions of heroic Muslim leadership and to invest him with the trappings of sovereignty. Equally, the analysis of the work of the Muslim National Guards, with their uniforms, flags, guards of honour, processions and the various other trappings of state authority borrowed from the British, points to a significant means by which a sense of separateness was publicly being expressed and developed among the urban Muslim populations of northern India. Indeed, Talbot asserts a much stronger popular participation in the demand for Pakistan than much current scholarship would allow:

> The fact that the Muslim League's organizational weakness prevented it from bringing about a permanent transformation in the structure of local politics should not be allowed to obscure the existence of mass participation in the Pakistan movement. Its political success in 1946 resulted from the ability to link the Pakistan idea with popular aspira-

tions and to anchor this message within the substratum of local rural Islam.

At the same time Talbot succeeds in bringing home to the reader, through his explorations of literary and biographical representations, the human experience of partition: the trauma of partition massacres, the social and political implications of which have yet to be explored; the complexity of human emotions released by the partition process, from the pride in a new homeland to the thought that Indian Muslim civilisation had taken a wrong turn; the appalling sense of uprootedness of the migrants, which has led many, or their descendants, to find their homes not in Pakistan but in the world. All of this is admirable, only it is a pity that Talbot's view is from the Pakistani side alone. The experience of partition, which was so harsh that both participants and subsequent commentators have found it difficult to confront, requires the story to be abstracted from the competing histories of state-making, and to be seen from all sides for the great human tragedy that it was.

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J.P.S. Uberoi, *Religion, Civil Society and the State: A Study of Sikhism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), xiv and 166 pp. Rs 325 (hb). ISBN 0-19-563691-0

The Indianness of India, Uberoi states unequivocally at the beginning of his book, is 'inversely proportional to its Hinduness and Hindutva'. This view he describes to be 'European . . . not to say Orientalist in origin. It identifies the strength of any nation or people with the principle of homogeneity or uniformity, the coincidence of its land, race, language, culture, religion, etc., culminating in the state'. The other description of India to which Uberoi himself subscribes, is a pluralist one. This view shows that the unity of humanity can be achieved through, 'reconciliation or negotiation of equality and difference, competition and cooperation, the convergence of underlying structures or the distribution of differences into complementary domains as the bases of mutuality, reciprocity and exchange, whether in amity or enmity' (p. v). The book is an exploration of this second view of Indianness.

The author embarks on this through study of Sikhism, a study which is both structural and semiotic, diachronic as well as synchronic in its method. It might be worth noting in passing that while several readers might think of this book as his first on India (most remember his *Other Mind of Europe: Goethe as a Scientist*, Delhi: OUP, 1984), the ideas in this book are the culmination of many of his ideas about the nature of modernity in general. The seeds of his ideas about pluralism are also contained in an early article entitled 'The Structural Concept of the Asian Frontier' (in D.P. Chattopadhyay (ed.) *History and Society: Essays in Honour of Niharanjan Ray*).

The main contention of this study is that Sikhism and Gandhian thought are India's new 'modern' forms of 'non-dualism, religion-in-society'. The three aspects of Sikhism which allow its claim to modernity, to self-rule and self-reform, are:

> (*a*) The cult of the Name or the Word, which attempts to reconcile the esoteric and the exoteric, individual and collective, in the form of worship using the vernacular ever since AD 1500; (*b*) the cult of remaining forever unshorn in the world, in the state otherwise commonly known as *anand*, in love and fear of a God who takes an interest in history, economics and politics; and (*c*) the cult of divine service (*seva*) especially within a society for self-realization, the Khalsa, special and general or singular and plural, the symbol of which is serene non-violent martyrdom. (p. 137)

In order to prove this claim to modernity Uberoi starts with the 'elementary structures' of medieval Islam and Hinduism. Two intersecting dualisms characterise the medieval structures of these two religions: status versus power and the individual versus the collective. These tensions gave rise to a tripartite division of religion, civil society and the state. In Hinduism therefore, these three aspects are exemplified by the '*sannyasi*,' the '*brahmin*' and the king; in Islam the '*ulema*', '*shri'at*,' and '*hukumat*'. These institutions in both religions stand also for exoteric religion, status and power, respectively. Underlying this tripartite division is the tension between the individual and collective, with exoteric religion exemplifying the individual and the other two the collective.

It is the author's thesis that the growth of Sikhism is a history of the resolution of the above tensions. The reader is offered a rare semiological study of the five symbols of Sikhism, a first attempt by anyone, which signify, in three respective pairs, 'the virtues and roles of *sannyas* yoga

(*kes* and *kanga*), *grihasta* yoga (*kachh* and the uncircumcised state) and *rajya* yoga (*kirpan* and *kara*), whether or not these spheres are further taken to correspond to religion as a way of salvation, the life of civil society and state'. The social function and effect of the Sikh initiation rite is, the author states, 'precisely to affirm the characteristic rights and responsibilities of the three spheres as equally valid and to invest them as an individed unit in the neophyte'. With this symbolic statement of the 'renunciation of renunciation', Uberoi argues, lies the key of the total emancipation of the religious man, and not merely an ideal of synthesis or reconciliation of Hinduism and Islam which was the faith and endeavour of Sikhism from its inception.

This book is thus a valuable addition to the existing corpus of writing on Sikhism. Its analysis is fresh, profound and persuasive. It has significance not only for Sikhism in particular, but for a sociological understanding of the nature of modernity in India. Readers should be warned that the slimness of the volume is deceptive. The book is packed with ideas which require slow and careful reading. A final word must be added about the creative use of visual representations of the author's arguments, through clear diagrams, calendar and miniature art.

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Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier (eds), *The Transmission of Sikh Heritage in the Diaspora* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), viii and 303 pp. Rs 450 (hb). ISBN 81-7304-155-5

This volume is an important recent contribution to a succession of volumes on Sikh Studies, and more recently Punjab Studies, originating in conferences outside India. It brings together papers from an international conference which was held at the University of Michigan in February 1994. Major themes were the nature of religious orthodoxy, gender awareness and cultural transmission and adaptation. The two editorial introductions, the many disciplines represented (including history, political science and religious studies) and the geographical diversity of the communities studied (including California, Singapore, Canada and the UK) result in a volume of relevance to a wide range of students and scholars.

This is no distanced ivory tower collection: the painful involvement of academics in an ongoing conflict over approaches to Sikh scholarship, discussed and documented by Helweg and O'Connell, leaves the reader in no doubt as to the connectedness of Sikh religious representation and academe.

Very much present (despite their absence as direct contributors) are Nikki Singh and Harjot Oberoi, as the attention to gender (by McLeod, Jakobsh and Axel) in response to Singh's *The Sikh Vision of the Transcendent* and frequent reference to Oberoi's study of the Singh Sabha movement testify. For example (p. 157), with reference to the diversity of Khalsa *rahit* in North America, Pashaura Singh questions Oberoi's contention that the 'older pluralist paradigm of Sikh faith was . . . replaced by a highly uniform Sikh identity'.

On gender, McLeod succinctly summarises the unequal situation in practice of men and women in the *Panth* and the options available. While approving her 'rigorous scholarship' Doris Jakobsh strongly critiques Nikki Singh for *beginning* with 'a hermeneutic of affirmation' instead of 'a hermeneutic of suspicion', and observes 'one is left with the impression that here is but another approach to Sikh apologetics, though cloaked in the jargon of theological feminism' (p. 53). Brian Axel champions Singh as providing 'the most formidable critique of Sikh discourse to have been produced in past decades' before pointing to the absence of women in the UK diaspora's images of itself.

Axel's exciting analysis of 'space, cartography and gender' focuses upon the Maharaja Duleep Singh Centenary Festival of 1993, held in Thetford and organised by the Nanaksar Thath Isher Darbar. Indeed, it is in its particular groundedness in local detail, no less than in its theoretical discussion, that this volume is especially valuable, giving as it does the specifics of pilgrimage Hemkunt-style (Gurdharm Singh Khalsa), the power struggles in the Guru Nanak Parkash Gurdwara in Coventry, UK (Shinder Thandi) and the *kirpan* cases in North America (Pashaura Singh).

Verne Dusenbery's account of 'Socializing Sikhs in Singapore' and Karen Leonard's of 'flawed transmission' in California recreate two of the longest-established diaspora communities, differentiated by the particular 'changes in the historical context [that] have powerful consequences for families and "communities" ' (Leonard p. 106). In the Singapore case, state policy on 'cultural ballast' and 'national values' plus government cooperation with the Sikh Advisory Board are presented in the context of Singapore's 'inclusionary corporatism' (p. 130) which means a 'depoliticised Sikhism' (p. 131).

The emphasis on diaspora, explicit in the volume's title, has not excluded three excellent chapters focusing on Sikh tradition in India. (But perhaps the title should have been more encompassing.) These are Fenech's 'The Taunt in Popular Sikh Martyrologies', Barrier's 'The Formulation and Transmission of Sikh Tradition: Competing Organizations and Ideology 1902–1925' and Khalsa's 'High Mountain Pilgrimage'. Fenech looks at the significance of taunting in such idealised hagiographic accounts as the story of the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur and the story of the Chali Mukte and the last hours of Baba Dip Singh. Mohinder Singh's critical examination of Sikh history (e.g., the 1849 treaty and the Anandpur Sahib Resolution) with reference to Khalistani rhetoric overseas nicely links Punjab and the diaspora.

Axel and Thandi provide useful bibliographies. It would have been helpful to have uniformity in this respect or a single cumulative bibliography, but this is a minor criticism.

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Chetan Singh, *Region and Empire: Panjab in the Seventeenth Century*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), x and 345 pp. Rs 375 (hb). ISBN 0-19-562759-8

Considering its stature as one of pre-modern Asia's most magnificent empires, and the enduring impact that it has had on the cultural landscape of South Asia, the Mughal empire in India has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention. True, and thanks largely to the 'Aligarh School' of historians, we know a good deal about the empire at the macro level: about its administrative system, economy, military–bureaucratic apparatus and so forth. But the literature on everyday life under the Mughals, especially in the provinces far removed from the glittering court at Agra or Delhi, cannot be said to be as impressive. It is in this area that the book under review makes an important contribution in that it focuses on one key province, the Panjab during the high point of the empire's fortunes, the seventeenth century.

In seeking to reconstruct, in the fullest possible way, the evolution of society and economy in seventeenth-century Panjab, Dr Chetan Singh has set himself a difficult task. Extant contemporary sources, whether official Persian documents and memoirs, European travellers' writings, or Sikh scriptures and enduring folk stories, are at best fragmentary; and back-

reading from the more detailed nineteenth-century British records is always fraught with danger. Yet Singh has succeeded in writing a richly detailed monograph which judiciously draws upon the widest possible range of materials.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first two are brief but necessary investigations into *(1)* the parameters of seventeenth-century Panjab as a distinct regional entity—this requires dexterous juggling of politico-administrative, geographic and socio-linguistic factors; and *(2)* the broad features of Mughal provincial and district administration, which, although based on formal rules and regulations, could be responsive to and shaped by local Panjab conditions.

Having established his essential framework, Singh goes on in Chapters 3–6 to explore the changing patterns of agriculture, the rural social order, urbanisation and trade. The connecting thread that runs through these chapters is that Panjab topographical and ecological diversity gave rise to a distinct diversity of crop patterns and agricultural practices, and that these in turn produced correspondingly diverse patterns of non-agricultural production, trade and urbanisation. From this Singh is able, logically, to suggest that in seventeenth-century Panjab 'there existed not a monolithic social structure, but a number of varied albeit inter-connected sub-regional societies' (p. 256).

The picture that emerges is not only of a remarkable complex and stratified society but also a society that was undergoing marked change and experiencing tension and unrest. The growing commercialisation of agriculture, evident in the increasing use of new irrigation techniques and the expanding cultivation of cash crops, together with increased handicraft production and domestic and foreign trade, resulted in some decisive social changes. One of the most important was the transition of the Jats from pastoralism to sedentary cultivation. Meanwhile other tribes were switching to, or participating in, commerce and trade. Inevitably this upward social mobility of Jats produced social strains, especially when the region suffered partial economic decline in the second half of the seventeenth century. Singh notes that such changing circumstances were also producing disaffection amongst low caste Hindu groups, but he particularly stresses the situation of Jats—now becoming the dominant social group within the Sikh community—because it helps him to understand the growth of the ideological strength (and the growth in militancy) of Sikhism. This is a most important point because, in the popular historical imagination at least, the emergence of Sikhs as a distinct community by the end of the seventeenth century is normally seen only

in terms of the deterioration of the community's political relations with the higher levels of the Mughal state apparatus.

In the final chapter, aptly titled 'A Society in Flux', Singh ties together the geographical, economic, political and ideological threads of his detailed analysis to present us with a picture of a remarkably dynamic and fluid society—a much more realistic picture, it must be added, than the relatively static impression conveyed by many of the older works on medieval Indian society. And if seventeenth-century society was less static than previously thought, then it follows that some of the roots of the notorious political turbulence of the eighteenth century might be older, and more local, than previously thought. Indeed this is Dr Singh's persuasive, final point: the large-scale social unrest and political violence that would come to the Panjab in the eighteenth century, he concludes, can no longer be viewed entirely as a consequence of the Mughal empire's rapid decline and collapse; instead, they were equally the products of 'long-term processes that had silently and steadily been at work in the region' (p. 285).

This book thus represents a very considerable step forward in the historiography of medieval India. Scholars of the Panjab, the Sikhs and the Mughal empire will welcome its richness of detail, meticulous scholarship and important insights into the workings of Panjabi society in the seventeenth century.

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Marie Gillespie, *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* (London: Routledge, 1995), xi and 238 pp. £12.99 (pb). ISBN-415-09675-8

Until quite recently the conventional approach for understanding cultural change among Britain's South Asian minorities was to draw heavily on the paradigm of 'clash of cultures'. Post-modernism, globalisation, diasporic infatuation, identity politics and the rise of Asian youth culture have provided new points of departure in which ideas of 'clash of cultures' have been displaced with the incessant hybridity of 'cultural translation'. This volume examines how 'television and mass media are being used to recreate cultural traditions within the "South Asian" diaspora in London, and how they are catalysing cultural change in [a] local community'. The research on which the volume is based was conducted in Southall and includes a survey of youths ranging from 12 to 18 years.

Unlike some practitioners of this framework, Gillespie eschews an extended discourse to provide a rich coverage of the empirical data on which the work is based. We are given an informative account of Southall as *chota Punjab*, the context in which media consumption takes place and conflicting assessments of the processes at work. Thus Gillespie observes, 'While young people use Indian films to deconstruct "traditional culture", many parents use them to foster cultural and religious traditions' (p. 87). But these tensions are only part of the story: in everyday television talk youngsters are deconstructing and reconstructing not only their cultural heritages but their daily lived experiences. This process is happening amidst rapid economic and social change, competing and overlapping models of youth culture, and rearguard defence from the 'gatekeepers' of major religious and cultural traditions. The combined effect of all these influences is that in Southall 'the redefinition of ethnicity is enacted in young people's collective reception and appropriation of TV' (p. 205). This redefinition is not simply a direct appropriation but also needs to be seen in the context of the indigenisation of global forces, especially media, that heighten cultural consciousness which encourages people to 'refine their conceptions of their own local culture, and at the same time redefine their collective identity in relation to representations of "others"' (p. 207).

There is much of value in this volume which will be welcomed by university teachers of courses on South Asians in the diaspora. In addition to providing a concise and clear introduction to the literature of the framework within which the study is set (a major achievement in itself!) we get powerful insights into the vibrant youth culture of Southall. There are useful paradoxes on gender, accommodation of 'cultural translation', and the relationships between youths from different religious and social backgrounds. In this respect this will certainly emerge as an essential text for the much neglected—and very important—subject of Asian youth culture.

The blemishes on this otherwise excellent publication occur when the author ventures out of cultural studies to generalise about political conflict in Southall or South Asia. It is difficult to take seriously Gillespie's affirmation of Appadurai's view that 'Khalistan' is simply an 'invented homeland of the deterritorialised Sikh population' or the view that Hindu fundamentalism (surely a contradiction in terms) can be explained away by the disaffected, marginalised and internally colonialised diasporic activists. If this were the case understanding Operation Bluestar or the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque would be relatively easy. And here is the rub. 'Cultural translation' may explain the predicament, or indeed the innovativeness, of those caught between the 'clash of cultures': it does

not explain their political disempowerment which continuously leads them to make tactical and strategic alliances with traditional ethnicities. When 'cultural translation' begins to deconstruct and disarticulate the latter in politically significant ways, then the subject may be worthy of the serious attention which is being claimed.

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Aitzaz Ahsan, *The Indus Saga and the Making of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), xxxii and 413 pp. Rs 495 (hb). ISBN 0-19-577693-3

Since 1994 Benazir Bhutto's government has been involved in establishing a new cultural policy for Pakistan. Its task, in the words of Fakhar Zaman, Chairman National Commission on History and Culture, is to 'strengthen our confidence in our national identity'. The author of the book under review is not a member of the Culture Committee, but his work reflects the official thinking on the historical evolution of Pakistani culture laid down in its 1995 policy document. At its heart is an attempt to demonstrate that Pakistani culture is not a modern construct but is rooted in the soil of the Indus region. The opposition to fundamentalist perceptions of Pakistani identity is rebuffed in both the policy document and this book which frankly acknowledges the legacy of the pre-Islamic era, something which would have been impossible in the Zia period. Again common to both is the linkage of toleration and resistance to oppression with the Sufi imprint on the region.

This is not to argue that Aitzaz Ahsan has produced an official history which is lacking in academic merit. The work is cogent, lively and in places informative. Inevitably because of its sprawling nature, covering the period from Mohenjodaro to Ayub, there is however much generalisation and a reliance on standard texts, some of which have been called into question by the recent production of specialist monographs. There are errors of both interpretation and fact. An example of the former is the misreading of the Unionist party's motive for the 1937 Sikander–Jinnah Pact which was not, as Ahsan claims on p. 333, because it 'needed the support and blessings of the . . . Muslim League'. Reference to the Royal Indian Army also gives the game away as does the identification of the famous early nineteenth century Baptist Missionary as William Care

(p. 289), a mistake which is compounded in the index. The attempt to prove Jinnah's liberal credentials and hence provide magisterial support for Pakistan's functioning as a secular Muslim state is also handled in a rather too obvious fashion.

The thesis which holds the work together is that the creation of Pakistan was the culmination of the primordial division between the Indus region of the subcontinent to the west of the Gurdaspur–Kathiawar Salient and the remainder of India. In drawing this rather too convenient cultural and geographical divide, Ahsan is thus able to dismiss as myth the view of Indian 'oneness'. The differences between Indus and India are depicted as 'civilisational and cultural' not merely those of religion. Material is then selected from the Mohenjodaro era onwards to support this ingenious refashioning of the Muslim League's historic two-nation thesis. It of course argued for Pakistan in terms of a primordial Hindu–Muslim religious divide. Ahsan is at pains both to broaden the basis of Pakistani identity and to emphasise the traditions of tolerance and the rejection of fundamentalism in the Indus region. He dates these traits from the Buddhist era, but sees them being reinforced by Sufism. The author endeavours to demonstrate that the Indus region drew its Islamic influence from Sufi-suffused Central Asia rather than from Arabia.

In an epilogue, Ahsan identifies the central strengths and weaknesses of the Indus (and hence in his terms Pakistani) personality. The flavour of this analysis is captured in the following two sentences: 'The Indus woman is intelligent, brave, and confident and has initiative. . . . In trying to reject Indus traditions (of liberalism and toleration) the present-day fundamentalists in fact lose out themselves. Indus citizens have repeatedly and consistently rejected them' (p. 340). The Indus personality's weaknesses, namely, consumerism, opportunism and lack of civic responsibility are attributed to distant historical roots such as the disorders of foreign invasions and the 'lottery' of British land grants (pp. 135, 344 ff).

The question remains whether this is a tract for the times or serious historical writing. The answer is that it contains elements of both. In the final analysis, however, the book's value derives primarily not from its own historical scholarship, but from the insights it provides into the mindset of the secularised intellectual elite on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of Pakistan's creation.

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      (c) Oren, 'The Sikhs, Congress, and the Unionists', 413–14.
      (d) Buchinani and Indra, 'Key Issues'.
      (e) Key, 'Nongovernmental Organisations'.
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THE CHALLENGE IN KASHMIR

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SUMANTRA BOSE

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